

InterPark



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Hersheypark's Chocolatetown

Park Life
Gulliver's Valley,
Yorkshire, UK



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Facing up to no 'face to face'

Andrew Mellor **Editor**

IN any 'normal' year I would be writing this column while preparing for my annual trip to the US to attend the IAAPA Expo in Orlando. But of course 2020 has been anything but a normal year as we all know.

The Orlando event is just one of the many industry gatherings to have been cancelled as a result of the global pandemic and like everyone else I've missed the opportunity to meet up with friends and colleagues from the business to catch up with the latest news on activities and to hear what's new and what different people are up to.

Sure we have better ways of communicating nowadays than ever before and can get a lot done remotely, but a Zoom or Teams call isn't the same as a face to face meeting, when more casual discussion so often takes place alongside the main business of the day and the reason for the meeting in the first place.

I've done a lot of travelling during my time in the parks industry to gather news and feature material from parks and manufacturers/suppliers for a wide range of articles. It's great that these days I can compile such items without actually leaving my desk but it's obviously not the same as being in someone's office for an interview, walking round a park seeing and discussing individual areas and attractions, or watching how a company produces sections of rides and attractions on their factory floor.

I've built up many strong relationships and great friendships over the decades, a large number of which have been regularly strengthened and renewed at trade shows or on a personal visit and it has made it a very special industry to work in as a result. And of course so much more can be achieved when actually visiting with someone in their own premises, such as a more in depth interview with lots of interesting asides, which often don't happen over the telephone or on a video call.

This is one point made by Bill Coan in our regular Open to Question feature in this issue of *InterPark*. He notes that while a lot can be done in a remote call, it's just not the same as travelling to meet someone on site and no doubt the majority of industry manufacturers and suppliers have found this in 2020. They may have saved a lot of travel time, and money, but these are the only plus points.

Another interesting area mentioned by Coan is in relation to how his company ITEC Entertainment is helping to find solutions for operators looking to prepare for future situations like COVID-19. Developing new health and safety protocols to ensure visitors and staff are kept safe while the pandemic is among us is one thing but operators will now want to develop these further so that if anything similar happens in the future, they are prepared and can continue to operate safely. Promoting such strategies to ensure consumer confidence will also be key and no doubt, like ITEC with its clients, others will be working to achieve similar goals too.

So as we all deal with the disappointment of not being able to travel to Orlando for the IAAPA Expo this month and the great week we all enjoy there, let's just hope that 12 months down the line things will be back to as near normal as possible and we can once again look forward to meeting up at the industry's main event of the year.

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Calendar

November 16–18

IAAPA Expo Virtual Education Conference, ONLINE
Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida 32837, USA
Tel: +1 321 319 7598
Fax: +1 321 319 7690
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org
www.iaapa.org/expoeducation

November 17–18

MAPIC, ONLINE
Contact: Reed MIDEM 27 Quai Alphonse Le Gallo, CS 10026 Boulogne, FRANCE
Tel: +33 179 71 95 15
Email: Daniela.jakovljevic@reedmidem.com
www.mapic.com

November 28–30

Amusement Fair China (Zhongshan) International Culture & Tourism Industry Expo 2020, Zhongshan Convention Centre, Zhongshan, CHINA
Contact: Tina Chang, Guangdong Grandeur International Exhibition Group
Tel: +86 20 2210 6418
Fax: +86 20 8257 9220
Email: sales@grandeurhk.com
www.zsgaf.com

2021

February 4–6

Atrax '21. 9th International Amusement – Attraction, Park – Recreation Industry and Services Exhibition, Istanbul Expo Centre, Istanbul, TURKEY
Contact: Tureks International Fairs Co.
Tel: +90 212 570 63 05
Email: nergis@tureksfuar.com.tr
www.tureksfuar.com.tr

February 2–4

IAAPA EMEA Trade Summit, Europa-Park, Rust, GERMANY
Contact: IAAPA, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida 32837, USA
Tel: +32 2 535 7721
Email: EMEA@IAAPA.org
www.iaapa.org/iaapa-emea-trade-summit

February 24–26

8th Events & Amusement Expo Tokyo, Makuhari Messe, Tokyo, JAPAN
Contact: Reed Exhibitions Japan Ltd.
Tel: +813 3349 8510
Email: eventexpo.eng@reedexpo.co.jp
www.eventexpo.jp/en-gb.html

The IAAPA EMEA Trade Summit is scheduled to take place at Europa-Park in Germany from February 2 to 4, 2021, with the rebuilt Pirates in Batavia ride being one of the attractions participants will be able to learn more about during the event

March 18–19

Family Attraction Expo 2020, NEC Birmingham, UK
Contact: 4 Colston Ave., Bristol, BS1 2NT, UK
Tel: +44 (0)117 930 4927
www.familyattractionexpo.co.uk

March 25–27

CAE Beijing 2021, China International Exhibition Centre, Shunyi New Venue, Beijing, CHINA
Contact: Katie Wang, L&A International Ltd., 6 Penmere Grove, Sale, Cheshire, M33 4FP, UK
Tel: +44 (0)161 610 0022
Email: katie.w@chinaattractionsexpo.org
www.chinaattractionsexpo.org

May 10–12

2021 Asia Amusement & Attractions Expo (AAA), China Import & Export Fair Complex (Area A), Guangzhou, CHINA
Contact: Tina Chang, Guangdong Grandeur International Exhibition Group
Tel: +86 20 2210 6418
Fax: +86 20 8257 9220
Email: sales@grandeurhk.com
www.aaaexpos.com

May 24–26

Saudi Entertainment & Amusement Expo, Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Riyadh, SAUDI ARABIA
Contact: DMG Events
Tel: +9 6612 697 0287
Email: marketing@saudientertainmentandamusement.com
www.saudientertainmentexpo.com

June 7–10

IAAPA Expo Asia 2021, Venetian Macao, MACAO
Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida 32837, USA
Tel: +1 321 319 7600
Fax: +1 321 319 7690
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org
www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia

September 9–11

GTI GUANGZHOU 2021, Area A, China Import & Export Fair Pahou Complex, Guangzhou, CHINA
Contact: Haw Ji Co., Ltd./Game Time International
Tel: +86 20 8126 9851
Email: gametime@taiwanslot.com.tw
http://www.gtiexpo.com.tw/cncht/index.php

September 28–30

IAAPA Expo Europe, Barcelona, SPAIN
Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida 32837, USA
Tel: +1 321 319 7600
Fax: +1 321 319 7690
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org
www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-europe

October 16–18

CAE Shanghai 2021, Shanghai World Expo Exhibition & Convention Centre, Shanghai, CHINA
Contact: Katie Wang, L&A International Ltd., 6 Penmere Grove, Sale, Cheshire, M33 4FP, UK
Tel: +44 (0)161 610 0022
Email: katie.w@chinaattractionsexpo.org
www.chinaattractionsexpo.org

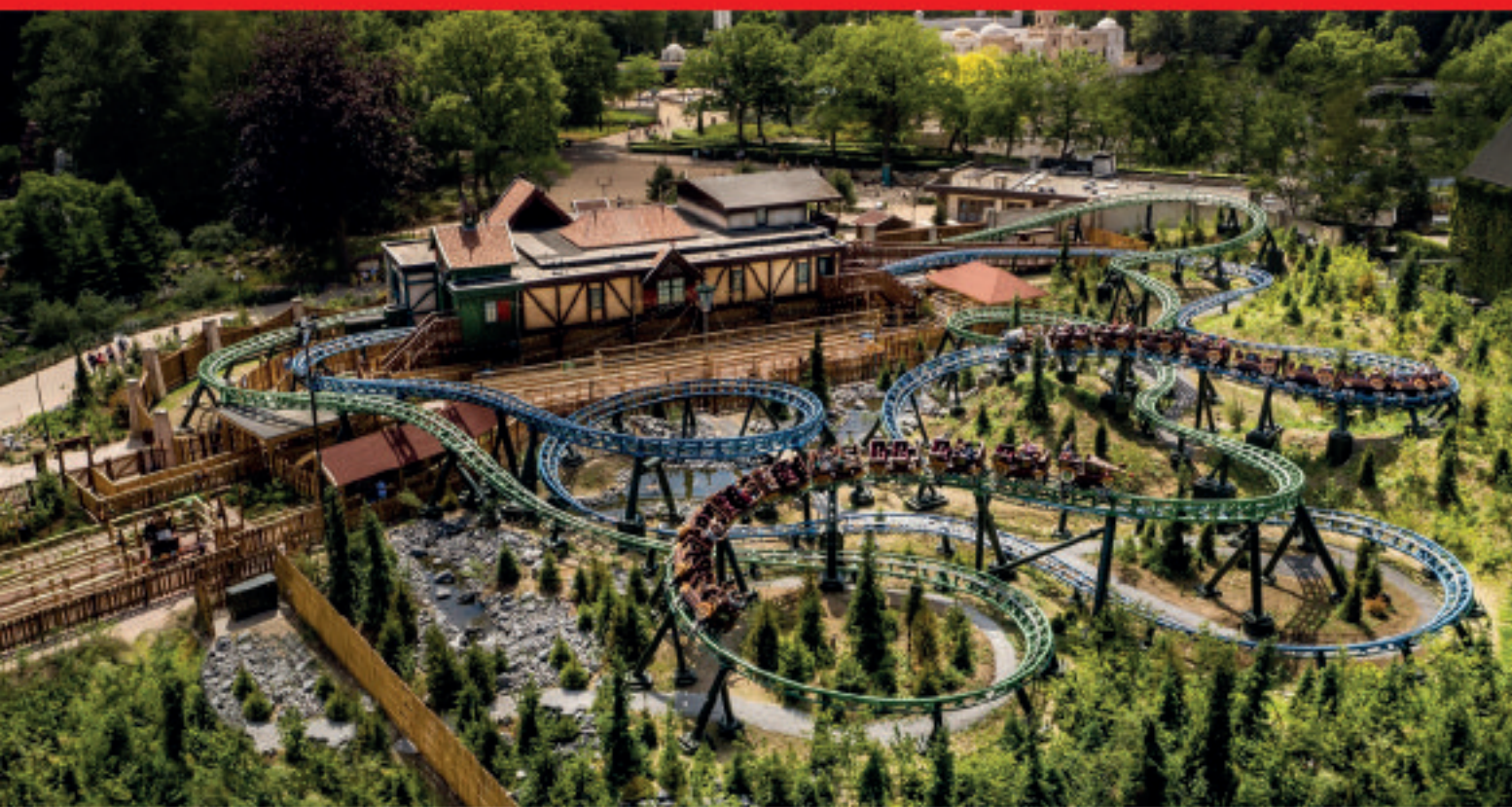
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Additional copies of **InterPark** distributed at these events.





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RCI Adventure Products launches Sterilisation Station

RCI Adventure Products, provider of entertainment products for adventure attraction venues, has launched a new Sterilisation Station. The station is designed to keep shared harnesses and climbing equipment virus and bacteria-free.

The product heats harnesses and other safety equipment to disinfect them safely and efficiently. Operators can use the sterilisation station to sanitise and sterilise equipment to meet health and safety guidelines, while maximising business efficiency.

Using temperatures of 133 to 149 degrees, viruses and bacteria are removed quickly from equipment. The compact cabinet is specifically designed to heat RCI Adventure Products' safety equipment and the station has a cycle time of 25 to 35 minutes.

The product is designed to provide customers with the peace of mind that they are protected from COVID-19 when enjoying adventure attractions.

Ronda Hulst, director of client success for RCI Adventure Products, spoke about the aim of the Sterilisation Station. "As COVID-19 was starting and business owners were looking for a way to reopen their ropes courses, they needed a way to sanitize their safety equipment – things that were coming into contact with the body," she said.

Triotech and BoldMove join forces to increase client-value

TRIO TECH, creators of immersive and interactive media-based attractions, has teamed up with Benoit Cornet and his new company BoldMove, specialists in designing and manufacturing action-based rides with customised theming.

The collaboration is aimed at bringing new transformative trends to theme parks and entertainment venues, as well as to retailtainment in shopping malls. The partnership will place a strong emphasis on overcoming the challenges the industry is facing in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Benoit Cornet was the founder of Alterface and, more latterly, BoldMove. Cornet brings extensive interactive ride technology experience and expertise to the partnership. BoldMove and Triotech will collaborate on technology, ideation and business development.

Ernest Yale, founder and CEO of Triotech, commented: "I have known Benoit for several years and we have always pushed each other to come up with better solutions for our clients. Before it was a competitive spirit that drove us, now it will be based on teamwork and collaboration."



First virtual trade show launched for FEC industry

THE first ever virtual trade show devoted entirely to the family entertainment centre industry was held in October. ShowUp took place from October 27 to 29 and was hosted by virtual reality expert Bob Cooney.

ShowUp saw industry leaders, operators, manufacturers and developers gather online to explore and discuss cutting edge solutions to diversify and innovate the industry, including 5G, AI, VR, AR and Photogrammetry.

Commenting on the rise of home entertainment options, such as virtual concerts on TikTok, Cooney said: "Operators think COVID-19 is an existential threat, but it's just the tip of the iceberg. The real danger is the acceleration of in-home entertainment technologies spurred by the pandemic.

"The shutdown challenges the industry, but it will come back. Countries like New Zealand, Australia and Singapore got control of the virus early and operators there have returned to near or above pre-COVID levels. There's a massive pent-up demand for location-based entertainment among families.

"Getting back to profitability is only step one for the industry. Operators need to embrace these emerging technologies to stay ahead of what consumers can do at home. If they don't, they'll go the way of mall video arcades of the 80s," Cooney added.



Clip 'n Climb presents new look for two climbing products

CLIP 'n CLIMB, a global leader in the design and manufacture of fun climbing products, has announced updated looks for its Jungle Vines and Morse Code Challenges.

Clip 'n Climb is focused on bringing innovation and quality to the fun climbing market. The two products in its Classics range will sport new panels, as well as printed graphics in vibrant colours.

Morse Code involves climbers spelling out messages as they climb. The attraction has been brought to life with a new colour scheme to appeal to visitors of all ages and complement the company's brand.

The Jungle Vine Challenge tests strength, balance and ability. Climbers follow routes highlighted by different coloured balls. The new-look challenge has new panels to give climbers the impression they are in a jungle.

Chaz McManus, design technician at Clip 'n Climb's factory in New Zealand, said: "The project's title is 'Refresh' which I think sums up our objective in a single word perfectly. Our aim is to take existing Clip 'n Climb designs and modify them using the simplest means possible with the goal of creating a better product for our customers and the brand they become a part of."



Visiting parks can help counter post-COVID-19 anxiety

VISITING amusement parks has been cited as an invaluable way to help cure post-traumatic stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research explores the social role of attending theme parks and its positive implications on mental health as a means of combating feelings of isolation and depression caused by lockdown – the same way superheroes did in the Great American Depression of the 1930s.

This evaluation has been voiced by Dr. Stefania Cerino, a specialist in psychiatry and clinical criminology and a researcher in the field of psychiatric rehabilitation.

“We have all been overwhelmed by the events and we have been thrown into a silent and empty world due to the lockdown, which distanced us from work, from affections, from moments of fun and left great perplexities about the future. The social isolation that COVID-19 forced us to have, has had many repercussions on general well-being,” said Dr. Cerino.

Gianni Chiari, ANCASVI technical secretary and member of the main international technical committees that develop safety standards for the attractions sector, worked alongside Cerino in the study. The research was supported by a special division of Zamperla that comprises doctors, technicians, psychologists and other specialists and was founded to support the themes of inclusiveness and make amusement parks accessible to all people with special needs.

The research notes the positive emotions created by going on rides and how this can be achieved safely when theme parks respect and follow COVID-19 health and safety regulations.



NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLDWIDE ALTERFACE, manufacturer of interactive and media-based attractions, has introduced its latest attraction creation, Action League, The Interactive Revolution. The innovative attraction combines tournament, interactive gaming and motion. Multiple players compete against each other in a sporty stadium featuring a rotating platform. Sound effects accompany each bounce, tilt and rotate, in what is a high-paced and energetic environment.

US ASTM International's amusement rides and devices committee is creating a standard that will establish new inspection and maintenance requirements for steam trains in amusement parks. The manufacturers of some original steam trains are no longer in existence and therefore unable to offer advice for maintenance and operational guidance. The committee's proposed standard will provide minimum maintenance requirements that are predominantly centred on historic practices. The standard will also use current railway industry benchmarks.

EUROPE A Jurassic-style dinosaur theme park is to open in Malaga, Spain, in 2021. The park will open before the launch of Jurassic World: Dominion, the long-awaited third installation of the blockbuster Jurassic Park film franchise, which will debut on June 10, 2022.

CHINA English football club Manchester United has announced the name of its new entertainment centres across China. The sites will be known as Theatre of Dreams. The entertainment complexes are being built in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenyang and Changsha, with the Beijing venue nearing completion. The centres will feature a number of state-of-the-art activities and attractions, including an interactive journey through Manchester United's 142-year history.



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MK Themed Attractions helps boost attendance at Tivoli Friheden

MK THEMED Attractions, providers of themed solutions for theme parks, festivals and other visitor attractions, helped Tivoli Friheden amusement park in Denmark increase visitor numbers by 45 per cent during the summer.

The boost in numbers was achieved by the implementation of a never-seen-before Flower Festival at the Danish theme park. The event was a huge success and will be repeated at Tivoli Friheden in 2021 and 2022. The festival featured sculptures designed by MK Themed Attractions, inspired by climate change and a passion for history. They included two talking trees, which were designed with the help of MK Themed Attractions' sister company, Creation Group.

The latter has been creating animatronic figures for over 50 years and the trees were activated through a push button, which, when operated, told stories about the park. A statue of Mother Earth took centre stage, the hair being made of ivy and flowers. All the sculptures were accompanied by a description providing visitors with insight into the designs.



New VR experience YULLBE Traumatica arrives at Europa-Park

A NEW VR experience has come to Europa-Park – the YULLBE Traumatica. Since October 2, visitors to the German theme park have been able to experience the free roaming VR thrill of Traumatica, in which they are confronted with a 10-minute horror spectacle.

Guests aged 18 and over are equipped with VR glasses and a tracker. The virtual adventure takes them into an apocalypse, where characters from the award-winning Horror Nights – Traumatica are waiting. Visitors are turned into members of the military organisation Resistance and fight against the deadly bloodsuckers. In addition to the VR experience, guests can walk through a 450m long Scare Zone, an atmospheric zone featuring more terrifying characters.

Michael Mack, managing director of Europa-Park and founder of MackNeXT, commented: "YULLBE cannot only tell stories, but also bring entire worlds to life. The latest VR adventure from our in-house innovation department as well as VR Coaster really goes under your skin and makes Traumatica an experience on a whole other level."



Conny-Land's Cobra coaster gets tenth birthday upgrade

THE Cobra – Europe's largest linear roller coaster – has been upgraded with new features and improvements to the rider experience.

Located in Conny-Land in Lipperswil, Switzerland, the largest theme park in the country, the Cobra takes riders racing along a track of more than 700 ft., this featuring a 137 ft. high slightly overhanging drop tower section, a loop, a scorpion tail and two camelbacks.

The coaster was originally built by PAX in 2010. For its tenth birthday, The Cobra has received a makeover which has included a newly developed train from Sunkid-Heege.

The most notable difference on the new train compared to the old is the seating arrangement. All the cars, except for the first and last, have two seat rows facing each other. Riders therefore face one another and can experience the ride facing either forwards or backwards.

Roby Gasser, manager at Conny-Land, commented: "This is an innovation that visitors love enormously, in particular in a shuttle loop coaster like the Cobra in Conny-Land."

Also new to the ride is a patented Embrace 5 retention system. This replaces the traditional solid shoulder harnesses with a protruding safety harness that is connected to a belt system. With the Embrace 5, riders are strapped in with padded belts and a textile chest support. The system adjusts to an individual rider's size and physique for extra comfort and adaptability.

Maurer creates spinning coaster for Kiev's Blockbuster Mall



A NEW attraction has arrived at the Blockbuster shopping mall in Kiev, Ukraine. The new indoor spinning coaster is simply named Rollercoaster.

The ride begins on a mezzanine level in the mall above a go-kart track. Riders are taken on a giddy journey comprising an S-curve designed to deliberately confuse their orientation. After falling into the first drop, guests spin dizzily above the go-kart track. Following a series of turns, riders are taken on a final burst of four turns.

The indoor spinning coaster has been developed by Maurer Rides. The vehicles boast an eye-catching design, resembling a cheetah, bear, parrot and snake and reach speeds of up to 55km/h. Featuring four vehicles, the ride can accommodate up to 550 people per hour.

The Blockbuster Mall opened in 2019 and the Galaxy Park opened inside the mall on September 5 this year.

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Jora Vision designs earthquake experience in Lisbon

JORA Vision, a leading European themed attraction design and build company, has been working with Turcultur, a Portuguese tourism company, to design a new experience that revisits the story of the shattering earthquake that hit Lisbon in 1755.

The 1,200sq.m experience is named the QUAKE Lisbon Earthquake Centre. The attraction features a 90 minute walk-through experience that is divided into 11 timed and show-controlled scenes. State-of-the-art project mapping, simulations, themed environments, interactive exhibits and special effects will bring the earthquake experience, which devastated Lisbon in 1755, to life.

QUAKE will be located in a new building in the Belem area of Lisbon. Marco Ruzza, creative director at Jora Vision, elaborated on what guests can expect when visiting.

"QUAKE challenges you to unlock the knowledge about the 1755 earthquake. Visitors of the experience will literally step back 260 years in time to re-live the event. They will be guided in groups of 24 persons through the different scenes of the experience."

The QUAKE Lisbon Earthquake Centre is due to open to the public in 2021.



IAAPA EMEA Trade Summit to be held at Europa-Park

FOR the first time ever, the IAAPA EMEA Trade Summit is to take place at Europa-Park in Rust, Germany. The event will be held from February 2 to 4, 2021.

The three-day summit will see the worldwide attractions industry gather at Europa-Park to connect, network, attend keynote sessions and explore an exhibition featuring a raft of exciting new products and services.

Designers and manufacturers in the attractions industry will showcase their latest innovations in Europa-Park's Confertainment Centre. Attendees will also have the chance to participate in behind-the-scenes EDUTours at Rulantica, Europa-Park's new waterpark, and at the theme park's recently re-opened Piraten in Batavia attraction.

Jakob Wahl, executive director and vice-president, IAAPA EMEA, said: "We are thrilled to launch this new, unique event which will include a trade show experience, education sessions and networking opportunities at one of Europe's most popular attractions."



Amusement Technical awarded BS EN 1090 certification

UK company Amusement Technical, specialists in the manufacture, maintenance and refurbishment of amusement rides, has been awarded BS EN 1090 certification. The certification is in Factory Production Control (FPC), which conforms to the BS EN 1090 standard Execution Class 3.

The BS EN 1090 is the European standard for the execution of steel structures and aluminium structures and the technical requirements for steel structures. From the procurement of raw materials to final inspection and testing, BS EN 1090 requirements include ensuring appropriate controls are implemented at every stage of the manufacturing process.

Amusement Technical's certification shows the company can provide advanced level compliance to the CE marking required in structural steel regulation and is able to work on complex and demanding projects.

Sean Brian, Amusement Technical's managing director, commented: "Working in the theme/amusement park industry requires the highest levels of assurance and safety. Even so, this prestigious achievement is no mean feat and reflects the whole team's commitment to continuous quality improvement and service excellence."

Blenheim Palace uses AI to estimate visitor numbers



BLEMHEIM Palace, a monumental country house in Oxfordshire, England, is using artificial intelligence to predict visitor numbers to help manage the capacity and flow of guests.

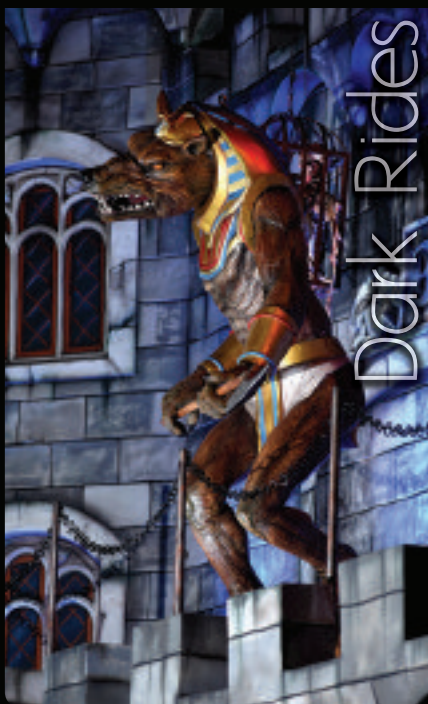
The UNESCO World Heritage Site welcomes approximately one million visitors annually. The site has teamed up with Oxford Brookes University to develop new and innovative approaches to heritage management and smart tourism through AI-enabled real-time data.

Blenheim Palace is to develop new sources and build on existing ones to create data algorithms to predict visitor numbers and profiles. It aims to create a greater understanding of live visitor flows at the site. With AI-enabled data, the tourist site will benefit from a more streamlined approach to the planning and management of staff, supplies, logistics, maintenance and hospitality.

David Green, head of innovation at Blenheim, said: "We'll be looking at two main areas of the visitor experience as part of the project. A new Customer Insight and Prediction module will focus on predicting visitor numbers and will allow us to model for different scenarios, such as weather conditions and related visitor behaviour."

"The second part of the project will focus on mapping out what the visitor journey through Blenheim looks like, from the moment they book a ticket online, to the moment they arrive and enjoy Blenheim Palace," he added.

Venetian Carousels



Dark Rides



Bumper Cars



Major Rides



Dubai Safari Park reopens with new attractions

DUBAI Safari Park opened in October with new entertainment, educational and interactive experiences.

The park closed in May 2018, since when it has been undergoing renovation and development work to expand facilities and improve the experience for visitors.

Dubai Safari Park is home to 3,000 mammals, amphibians, birds and invertebrates. New animals have been introduced at the park, including giraffes and African elephants, and guests can travel around the park in state-of-the-art trains and on bus tours.

Dawoud Al Hajri, director general of Dubai Municipality, commented on the reopening of the 119-hectare venue, saying: "As the momentum of recovery in the tourism market gathers pace, Dubai Safari provides an exciting attraction for both international visitors and residents. The redesigned Dubai Safari has many unique interactive programmes blended into the safari journey that provide visitors with a unique and memorable experience.

"Not only can they see different types of animals from across the world, but they can also enjoy activities, performances and shows that entertain as well as educate," Al Hajri added.

Bear Grylls Explorers Camp to open on Jebel Jais mountain



BEAR Grylls Survival Academy is to open the world's first Bear Grylls Explorers Camp (BGEC) on Jebel Jais, the highest mountain in the United Arab Emirates.

For the first time ever, adventurers participating in one of Bear Grylls' renowned survival courses will be able to stay in specially designed accommodation. The camp will feature 20 recycled and redesigned containers for a truly sustainable experience. The self-catering accommodation is designed to host up to three guests who can stay on the mountain and experience instructor-led survival courses.

The BGEC caters for what is now considered the "new normal," with small groups gathering in open and natural environments with social distancing and other health and safety protocols in place.

The Bear Grylls Survival Academy has been a huge success in Britain. This new academy, along with the world's first Bear Grylls' branded camp accommodation, will make its debut in the Middle East in 2021.

The opening of the BGEC is seen as testament to the tourism recovery in the Ras Al Khaimah region of the UAE.

Clymb Abu Dhabi introduces four new climbing routes

CLYMB Abu Dhabi, a huge indoor adventure hub that is home to the world's largest indoor skydiving flight chamber, is introducing four new climbing routes across its climbing walls.

The upgraded routes are known as The Boulder, The Advance, the Summyt and The Intermediate. The new routes cover a number of different styles and challenges, with each one featuring distinct climbing holes, while at the same time catering for a variety of ability levels, from beginner to professional.

Talking about the addition of the new routes, Bianca Sammut, acting head of Yas Theme Parks, said: "Although Clymb Abu Dhabi has only been open for nine months, it's never too soon to look for new ways to enhance the guest experience. The addition of the new climbing routes means that our climbers have more options to choose from, regardless of their level of experience."

Clymb Abu Dhabi is home to the world's tallest climbing indoor wall, which stands at 42.16m. Other climbing walls at the indoor adventure site include a 20m advanced wall, a 10m intermediate wall and a six-metre beginners' wall.



Holovis opens new office in Abu Dhabi

HOLOVIS, creator and innovator of next generation immersive, interactive, personalised and multi-sensory experiences, has expanded its global office network to Abu Dhabi.

On October 1, the company opened a new management and project office in the city. The office is part of twofour54, a hub for content creators that provides top-quality infrastructure and support services to the creative community.

Holovis is no stranger to the Middle East, having been involved in project work at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi. The firm has also helped develop rides and attractions for Dubai Parks and Resorts and is currently engaged in work throughout the GCC region.

Stuart Hetherington, CEO of Holovis, shared his enthusiasm for the opening of the new office, commenting: "After working in the GCC for over a decade and with plenty of large-scale projects in progress and in our pipeline, it makes perfect sense to set-up a permanent new home in such a creative and exciting part of the region."





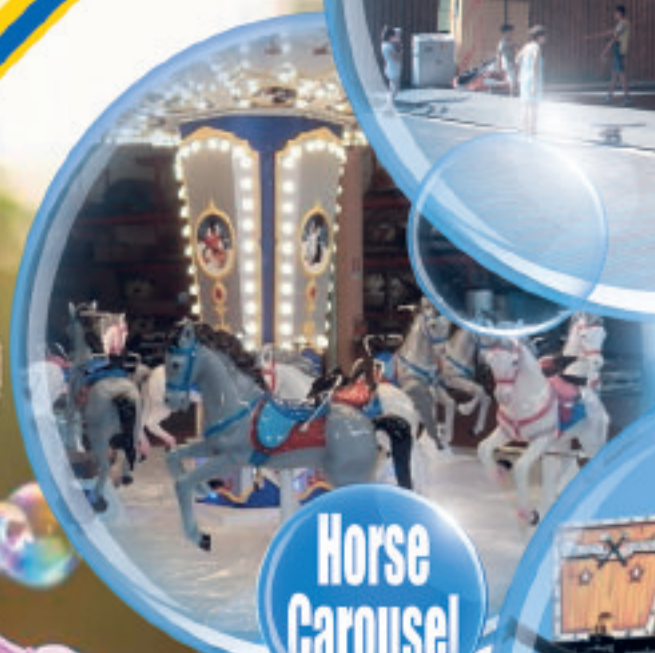
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ADG Mountainsides' mountain coaster opens at Olympic venue

ADG Mountainsides' latest mountain coaster has opened at the US Olympic Venue in Lake Placid, New York. At 7,000ft. long, the coaster is now the longest mountain roller coaster in the United States.

The attraction travels alongside the venue's 1980 Olympic bobsled track. The first ride took place on October 11. The ADG Mountain Coaster is equipped with a timed audio system, enabling guests to experience what an Olympic bobsledder would have experienced during the Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid.

Guests listen to Olympic-inspired commentary when they are on their way up to the start of the ride, which is the first of its kind for new mountain coasters. After listening to the audio narrated by bobsled commentator John Morgan, the coaster hurtles down the mountain, zig-zagging its way over twists and turns designed by ADG engineers to replicate the historic bobsled track. Several 360 degree turns were added to the ride to heighten the thrill factor.

The Olympic themed carts seat two riders and match the look and feel of a bobsled. The vehicles can reach speeds of up to 25mph and the driver controls the speed of the cart as it races down the mountain.



Jurassic World VelociCoaster coming to Islands of Adventure

UNIVERSAL Orlando has confirmed that a new Jurassic World VelociCoaster is being built on the Jurassic Park shores of the Islands of Adventure lagoon. According to Universal Orlando, construction of the new coaster is well underway.

Jurassic World VelociCoaster is hailed as a "new species of roller coaster," with two intense launches and four inversions. Track work on the new ride is now complete, while the intricate rock work that will obscure the track has yet to be built. The new Jurassic World VelociCoaster is due to open in the summer of 2021.

Universal's Islands of Adventure theme park opened in 1999, as part of an expansion that converted Universal Studios Florida into Universal Orlando Resort. The theme park is centred on a journey of exploration, where visitors go on an adventure visiting numerous themed islands.



Cedar Fair reports preliminary operating results for Q3 2020

CEDAR Fair, a world leader in regional amusement park and waterpark entertainment, has announced its preliminary operating results for the third quarter of 2020.

The preliminary results show attendance to its parks in the third quarter totalled 1.3 million visitors, an 11.9 million drop compared to the same period in 2019. In-park per capita spending is also expected to decrease to \$47 from \$49.94, a drop of around 6 per cent. However, in-park spending on merchandise, food and drink and games was collectively up by 18 per cent in the third quarter. The increase was offset by decreases in spending in admissions and front-of-lane Fast Lane products.

Cedar Fair closed its parks in March this year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Late in the second quarter, it began to open seven of its parks, in compliance with state and local health and safety guidelines.

Net revenues for the third quarter of 2020 are expected to be between \$85m and \$90m, a significant shortfall compared to \$715m in the third quarter of 2019. The decrease is a direct consequence of the 11.9 million-visit loss in attendance and a decrease in out-of-park revenues.

Richard Zimmerman, president and CEO of Cedar Fair, said: "Given the challenges and uncertain environment caused by the pandemic, we are pleased to have opened seven of our parks to date. Getting parks open has allowed us to re-engage with our customers and, at the same time, demonstrate the ability to provide our guests and associates with a safe and enjoyable entertainment offering."



The Friends Experience opens in Chicago

THE Friends Experience has moved to Chicago following successful runs in New York and Boston. The interactive space comprises 12 Friends-nostalgia rooms and activations. New to the Chicago experience is the iconic Friends fountain and Monica's kitchen.

The Chicago Friends Experience marks the third successful collaboration between attraction design company JRA, theme entertainment specialists Superfly X, Warner Bros. and Chicago Scenic Studios.

The Friends Experience provides fans of the much-loved show with the chance to explore and rediscover its history. Guests can go down memory lane to a recreated Central Perk, can relax on Joey and Chandler's recliner and help Ross with his infamous sofa pivot and much more.

Jonathan Mayer, founder and CEO of Superfly X, said: "We hope The Experience will bring a bit of joy to Chicagoans in these difficult times. Our team has worked diligently to ensure that the experience provides fans of the show with a fun yet safe environment while visiting."

The Friends Experience is being held at The Shops at North Bridge in Chicago from October 1 to January 3, 2021.

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Walt Disney to make 28,000 job cuts at US theme parks

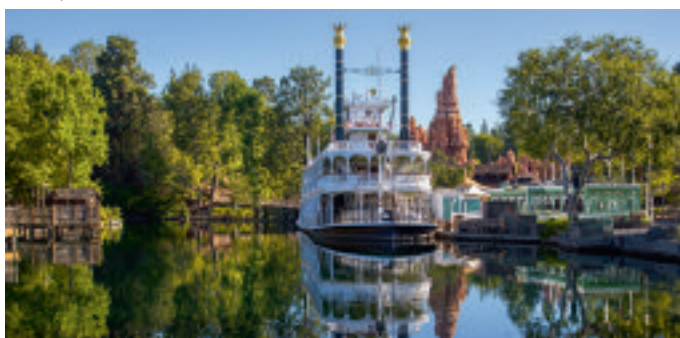
WALT Disney recently announced it will lay off 28,000 members of staff, most of whom work at its theme parks in the US.

Limited visitor capacity and uncertainty about the future have been labelled as the principle reasons for the redundancies. Disney has been heavily impacted by the pandemic. All its parks were forced to shut earlier in the year, while Disneyland in California remains closed.

In the three months to June 27, 2020, Disney lost \$4.7bn. Revenues for its Parks, Experiences and Products division fell by 85 per cent compared to the same quarter in 2019. Around 67 per cent of the layoffs will affect part-time employees.

Josh D'Amaro, chairman of the Disney parks unit, commented: "We have made the very difficult decision to begin the process of reducing our workforce at our Parks, Experiences and Products segment at all levels."

D'Amaro said Disney's problems have been "exacerbated in California by the state's unwillingness to lift restrictions that would allow Disneyland to reopen."



New coaster announced for Silverwood Theme Park

A NEW coaster known as Stunt Pilot is coming to Silverwood Theme Park in Idaho in 2021.

The name of the ride was inspired by the much-loved air shows that took place at Silverwood during its early years. In 1988 when the park was founded, guests gathered to enjoy pony rides, a train ride, an aircraft museum and the air shows, which are now an iconic memory of Silverwood's history.

Stunt Pilot is a single-rail roller coaster, which soars to around 105ft. in the air. Riders are plunged down a near-vertical dive followed by hairpin turns, three inversions and aerobatic manoeuvres. Made of steel, the coaster can reach maximum speeds of 52mph.

Stunt Pilot will be the first coaster to be installed at Silverwood for more than 10 years. It has been developed by Rocky Mountain Construction and is due to be open to visitors at the park during 2021.



Legoland Florida to launch 10th birthday celebration in 2021

LEGOLAND Florida is to celebrate its tenth birthday in 2021 and to mark the event the park is having a year-long party.

As the theme park draws close to its tenth birthday, families are being invited to join in the birthday bash with the "#be10too" event. These play moments invite parents to embrace their inner child and feel like they are aged 10 again. New interactive shows, events and experiences are aimed at getting the whole family involved in creating fun Lego-building memories.

Other new attractions for the tenth anniversary party include a Watersports Stunt Show. The show will launch on February 12 and features new female Lego pirate characters, new original music and gravity-defying stunts, including barefoot skiing and jump acts.

PirateFest Weekends will debut on February 12 and run for three consecutive weekends. These crafty events involve new Lego character meet and greets, a new musical show and pirate themed build activities.

Guests visiting Legoland Florida next year can also experience a 4D movie, a Master Builder Experience, Lego Friends Weekends, Miniland shade structures, larger-than-life models and much more.



TCL Chinese Theatre to reopen with MediaMation's SafeTSeats

MEDIAMATION Inc., creators of technological solutions to the cinema, themed entertainment and amusements market and MX4D Motion EFX theatres, has introduced a new product, SafeTSeat.

MediaMation has partnered with TCL Chinese Theatres to install safety seating into the organisation's theatres ahead of reopening. SafeTSeat is a plexiglass barrier that is installed between the seats at cinemas and entertainment venues to enable the safe social distancing of visitors attending MX4D Motion EFX theatres.



SafeTSeat is one of the first protective inventions specifically for public seating. With a plexiglass screening in between seats, the device is designed to give guests greater confidence to attend theatres, while guaranteeing social distancing. The clear screen helps provide visitors with an immersive experience without feeling confined.

Talking about the installation of SafeTSeating, a representative of TCL Chinese Theatres said: "We are planning to initiate a safety protocol for customers that is as good as, if not better than, any of our peers. The SafeTSeat is among the key components that will help make the plan an industry standard as we await permission from the country to reopen."



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Super Nintendo World to open in Japan in early 2021

SUPER Nintendo World at Universal Studios Japan is to open in early 2021. The site will be the first theme park area in the world to be centred exclusively on the characters and worlds of Nintendo.

Super Nintendo World will be home to Mario Kart and Yoshi-themed rides and attractions. Visitors can immerse themselves in a colourful and interactive area, where they wear a wristband known as a Power Up Band. Armed with this, guests can hit blocks, jump, collect virtual coins and more, in an interactive experience designed to bring Super Mario games to the real world.

The Hollywood Area of Universal Studios Japan will feature the world's first Mario Café & Store. Diners will be able to tuck into exclusive Mario-themed food, such as Super Mario pancake sandwiches, washed down with cream sodas. Nintendo fans can also shop for merchandise in an immersive and authentic retail space, where they will find a full line-up of Mario merchandise featuring original designs from Universal Studios Japan.

An official date for the opening of Super Nintendo World has yet to be announced.

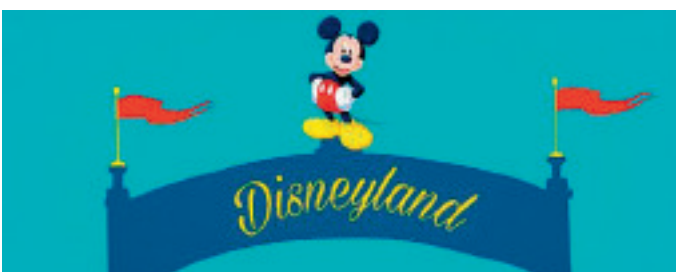


Disney fans campaign for a Disneyland in Australia

DISNEY enthusiasts in Australia have started a campaign for the creation of a Disneyland theme park to be built in their country. The petition, titled Time for Australia to have our very own Disneyland!, is in circulation and has garnered thousands of signatures.

Walt Disney Company has Disneyland resorts around the world but has yet to build one in Australia. The petition has been launched on Change.org, urging the Walt Disney Company to launch a theme park "down under."

"They think Australia simply doesn't have the population to support a Disney park and that the tourism market wouldn't do enough to fill in the gaps," notes the petition, adding: "I beg to differ. I believe Australia HAS the population, not to mention the international tourism it would create as well, and the tourism market to make it just as successful as other Disneyland's around the world."



Anjo World reopens in the Philippines

ANJO World amusement park in the province of Cebu in the Philippines officially reopened to guests on September 11, following six months of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anjo World is Cebu's first theme park. The amusement park features more than 12 rides and attractions.

To ensure the health and safety of visitors, the park has implemented a number of health and safety measures, including reducing capacity to 50 per cent, physical distancing, temperature checking, mandatory wearing of facemasks, health declaration for contact tracing and the regular washing of hands and sanitisation.

Other health and safety measures include non-contact at entry and exit points to the park, the regular disinfection of rides and facilities and the contactless ordering of food.

Anjo World is located at the Belmont One Commercial Complex in Barangay Calajaoan in Minglanilla town. Chester Lim, president of Belmont One, commented on the reopening of the site, saying: "As we slowly reopen the economy, we at Anjo World welcome guests as we adapt to the new normal measures for the amusement tourism."

ITEC Entertainment announces concept design for The Forestias



ITEC Entertainment Corporation, a leader in global design and technology solutions, has announced a multi-generational concept design for The Forestias, the largest private sector property development in Thailand.

ITEC has partnered with leading Thailand property developer Magnolia Quality Development Corporation Limited (MQDC) to develop an innovative and sustainable living community experience for residents of all ages.

The Forestias will feature multi-generational residential components, including villas, condominiums and estate homes. The community will cater for diverse lifestyles and sizes of families and will comprise commercial spaces, including offices, food and drink outlets, a recreation complex and family education and entertainment facilities. At the heart of the site will be a sapling-planted 4.8 hectare forest.

Kittiphun Quiyamaphun, project director for The Forestias, commented: "Everything at The Forestias is designed with a common purpose to promote the good health and happiness of residents to a level never before undertaken, including the layout of the public spaces, home layouts, choices of materials used inside and outside homes, the integration of 21st century life technologies and the management of natural light, noise, heat, airflows, as well as air quality and water quality."

Construction of The Forestias began in 2019. The first phase of the project will be completed in 2021.

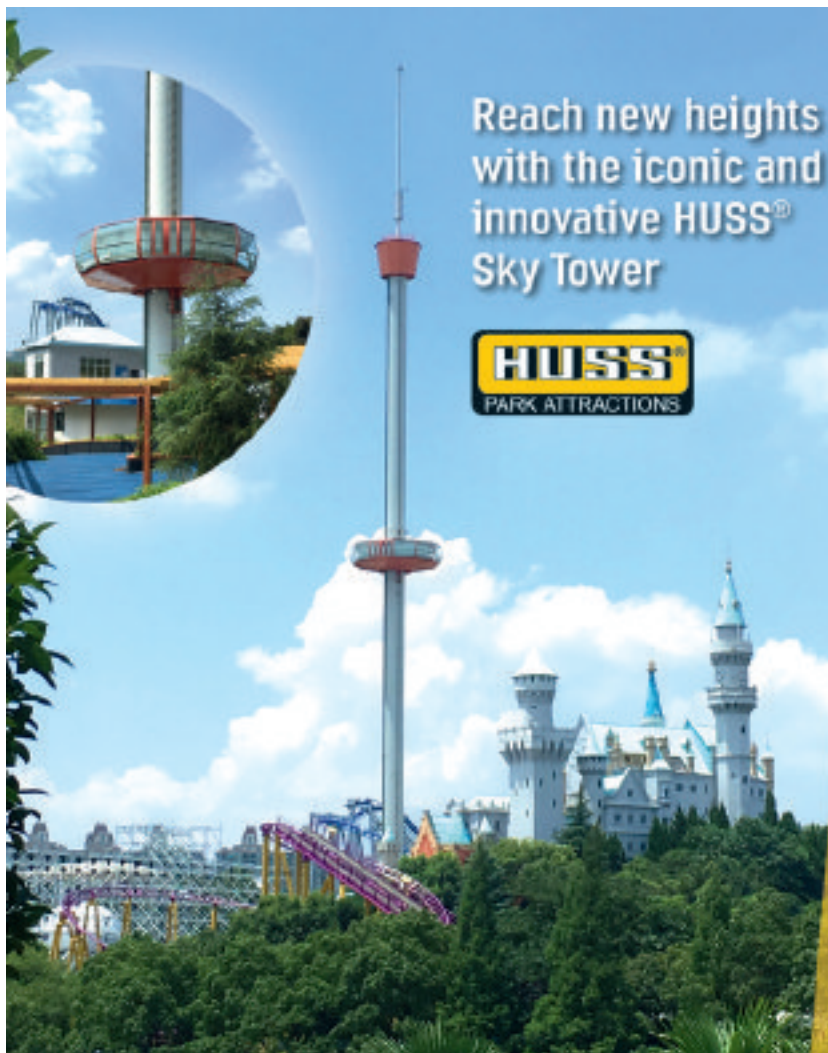


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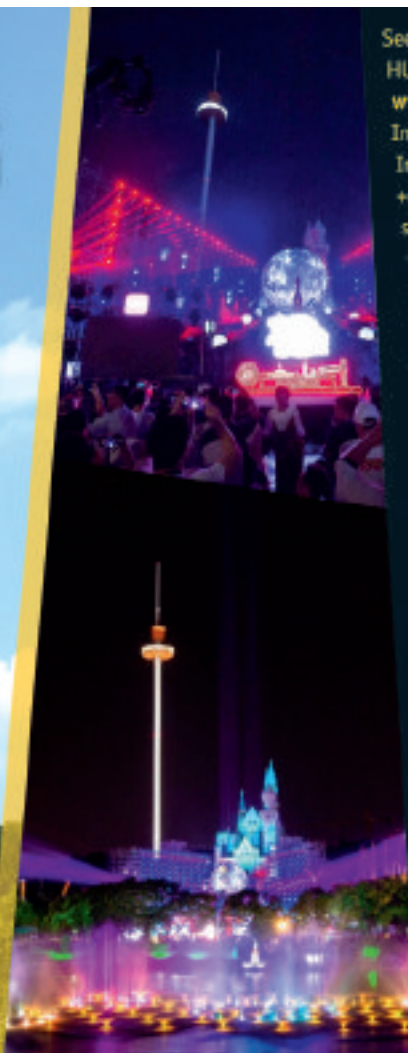
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Dreamworld operators fined \$2.5m for fatal ride malfunction

ARDENT Leisure, the operator of Dreamworld Theme Park in Australia, has been fined US\$2.5m (AUS\$3.6m) for the malfunction of a ride that led to the death of four people.

The incident took place in 2016. The four visitors were on the Thunder Rapids Ride at the park when their raft collided with another and flipped over, resulting in the passengers being thrown from the raft and sustaining fatal injuries.

Ardent Leisure pleaded guilty to three safety charges in July 2020, the court being informed of a number of safeguarding failures. An inquest in 2018 heard that the tragedy may have been avoided if the emergency stop button on the ride had been pressed. Employees at the theme park said that during training they had been advised "not to worry" about the emergency button and only rely on the slower, seven-second button.

Ardent Leisure is the operator of two theme parks on Australia's Gold Coast, Whitewater World and Dreamworld. Additionally, the company operates the Sky Point observation deck, also on the Gold Coast.

In a statement about the accident, Ardent Leisure's chairman Gary Weiss said: "Ardent accepts responsibility for this tragedy without qualification or reservation. Today we accept the court's decision to impose a fine of \$3.6m which is the largest fine in Queensland history for a workplace tragedy."

Nijigen no Mori theme park opens Godzilla Museum

NIJIGEN no Mori theme park, the anime-themed attractions park on Awaji Island in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan, is opening its Godzilla Museum ahead of the site's Godzilla expansion.

In 2019, Nijigen no Mori announced a new Godzilla-themed area, featuring a huge Godzilla model. At 20m high, 25m wide and 55m long, the replica is described as the "world's largest life-size Godzilla." The area was due to open in the summer of this year.

The theme park has announced it has opened the Godzilla Museum ahead of the opening of the rest of the themed area. The museum features dioramas of different scenes from the Godzilla films. Its rooms are filled with over 80 Godzilla figures, as well as props used in the films and prototype models of the different monsters.

The museum is accompanied by a gift shop selling Godzilla merchandise and a restaurant serving speciality Godzilla dishes.



Yomiuriland invites guests to work remotely from a Ferris Wheel

YOMIURILAND theme park near Tokyo, Japan, is inviting visitors to work remotely from the luxury of a Ferris Wheel.

With many still working from home due to COVID-19 restrictions, Yomiuriland is striving to provide homeworkers with a change of scenery and the chance to work with a view. The park is offering an Amusement Workcation package. The package includes a table, chairs and Wi-Fi located either next to the park's palm-tree lined swimming pool or on the Ferris Wheel.

When their working day is done, guests can enjoy other attractions at the park, including a haunted house, botanical garden and laser tag.

The Amusement Workstation package was launched on October 15. It costs JPY1,900 (\$18) for a single person and JPY3,600 (\$34) for two people. Just 35 minutes from Shinjuku, Yomiuriland is the largest amusement park in Tokyo.



Shaun the Sheep Farm Garden in Japan gets illuminations makeover

TOHOKUSHINSHA Film Corporation has announced a new immersive illumination event is taking place at the Rosa & Berry tourist attraction in Tawada, Japan. The event is the world's first illumination experience featuring Shaun the Sheep from UK studio Aardman.

The Rosa & Berry Illumination Fairy Fiesta – Lighting Performance on the Hill show opened on October 23 and will run until March 28, 2021. The event involves an area of around 60,000sq.m illuminated by 800,000 LED lightbulbs of different colours. Shaun the Sheep fans can discover the iconic Mossy Bottom Farm illuminated in vibrant lightbulbs.

The project has been launched as a long-term business plan for Rosa & Berry, designed to give the local tourism industry a boost. Ngaio Harding-Hill, head of attractions and live experiences at Aardman, commented: "The inspired team at Rosa & Berry have produced another magical event that's sure to bring joy to visitors throughout the winter season."





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CLDC teams up with ViacomCBS to develop Nickelodeon FEC

CHINA Leisure Development Co. (CLDC) has formed an alliance with ViacomCBS to develop a Nickelodeon-themed family entertainment centre in Shenzhen, China.

The FEC will comprise four attraction zones, featuring PAW Patrol, SpongeBob SquarePants, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Dora the Explorer. Young visitors will be immersed into the worlds of these popular characters, broadening their love for the icons beyond the screens. Nickelodeon Playtime will also be home to a sit-down play café and Nickelodeon-branded retail.

Jack Rouse Associates (JRA), specialists in attraction design, are providing the master planning, writing and concept development, attraction design and graphic design for Nickelodeon Playtime.

Linda Dong, president of China Leisure, commented: "We are thrilled to be partnering with Nickelodeon to bring their highly popular brands to life in an FEC format. We see rapid growth in family entertainment spending in China and strong demand from shopping centres for experimental products. Nickelodeon Playtime is part of our strategy to capitalise on this trend."

Gerald Raines, senior vice-president of global location based experiences at ViacomCBS, said: "Connecting with audiences on-the-ground through immersive experiences remains an integral part of Nickelodeon's global business. We are proud to partner with China Leisure to launch Nickelodeon Playtime and bring the brand and its iconic characters to families in Shenzhen and the surrounding areas."

The FEC is due to open in the fourth quarter of 2020 at Shenzhen OCT Happy Harbour.



Construction complete on Universal Beijing Resort's main buildings

CONSTRUCTION is now complete on the principle buildings of Universal Beijing Resort. Work on the iconic globe entrance to the site was due to be finished in September.

The site is being built using state-of-the-art technology, the car park building, for example, being constructed with information modelling technology. Environmental elements are also a key feature of the building of the resort, with dust pollution being meticulously avoided through a number of effective measures.

Universal Beijing Resort is set to begin trial operations in spring 2021 and will officially open in May. The new venue will comprise Universal Studios Beijing, Universal Studios Grand Hotel and the NUO Resort Hotel.



Ocean Park adds new activities to tap into 'staycation' market

OCEAN Park in Hong Kong is to introduce new activities in an attempt to tap into China's "staycation" market.

In October, the park introduced hiking, yoga and camping experiences to cater for a growing demand for "staycation" holidays and activities amid the ongoing health crisis. Visitors can practice yoga outdoors and stay the night in a brand new campsite.

According to Lau Ming-Wai, chairman of Ocean Park, the objective is to launch activities that promote wellbeing and which will strengthen the site's connection with communities in the southern district.

Talking about the changes at Ocean Park, Ming-Wai commented: "These are just the tip of the iceberg. It's just the immediate changes we can make to bring new experiences without having major construction and huge expenditure ... When more details on our rethink process can be announced at the end of this year, I hope it will be a newly reinvented park."

Ocean Park Hong Kong also recently announced the suspension of its annual Halloween festival because of the current uncertain climate. It was the first year the family event hasn't taken place since its launch in 2001.

Chongqing Sunac Cultural Tourism City opens for trial operation



CHONGQING Sunac Cultural Tourism City has opened for a trial operation. The site features the Sunac Waterpark, home to a series of slides, as well as 26 hot spring pools and Sunac Snow World.

With an average temperature of -6°C, the snow park offers ski activities all year round, as well as ice and snow entertainment.

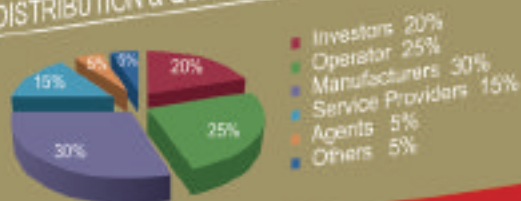
Chongqing Sunac Sea World is also part of Chongqing Sunac Cultural Tourism City. The marine park covers a 46,000sq. m site that features mammal and fish displays, large-scale performing arts and an indoor dolphin theatre that can accommodate up to 1,500 visitors.

The new destination is also expected to be the home of sports and training centres, including a skateboard park, a scuba diving training facility, a themed climbing and shooting hall and an e-sports centre.



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WATERPARKS

Polin receives WWA Leading Edge Award for Suntago Water World



POLIN Waterparks, a global leader in the design, production and installation of waterparks and water attractions, received a Leading Edge Award during the World Waterpark Association's (WWA) virtual trade show.

The award was in recognition of Polin's work on Suntago Water World in Poland, Europe's largest indoor waterpark. The WWA defines the accolade as being "Awarded to individuals or park for creativity in the development of new themes, facilities, programmes, services or operational concepts in the water attractions industry; and to suppliers who have developed new concepts, products or services to the benefit of park members, their customers or the water attractions industry."

Suntago Water World extends over 67,000m.sq. It can accommodate up to 10,000 guests, 365 days of the year. The park's swimming pools cover a total area of 3,500sq.m, while it also features 32 waterslides which have a combined length of 3.2km. Europe's longest waterslide is among Suntago Water World's slides, at 320m, as are more than half a dozen of Polin's signature slides.

The waterpark is also home to 10 saunas and luxury spas, as well as a 40,000sq.m "tropical" garden which features over 700 palm trees and plants imported from Florida, Malaysia and Costa Rica.

Sohret Pakis, Polin's director of marketing and communications, commented: "This recognition of our passionate efforts by WWA means a lot. We gratefully send all of our thanks to the WWA board of directors and congratulate all the winners who are passionate about serving and contributing to this amazing industry. Together we are strong and successful."

Universal to close Volcano Bay waterpark for the winter

UNIVERSAL Orlando has announced it is to close its Volcano Bay waterpark for the winter season. The "seasonal closure" was due to begin on November 2 and end on or before March 1, 2021.



Universal will use the closure period to carry out annual maintenance on several rides and attractions. The company says it does not intend to close the waterpark every year, also stating that it was working with annual passholders and customers who have purchased tickets for Volcano Bay during the period of closure.

Universal Orlando closed in March because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It reopened its three parks, including Volcano Bay, in June, with strict health and safety measures in place.

In July this year Universal Orlando announced its annual Halloween Horror Nights celebration would be cancelled as the resort was focusing "exclusively on operating its theme parks for daytime guests, using enhanced health and safety procedures already in place."

WhiteWater announce Endless Surf project with Surf the Wave, Vietnam



WHITEWATER has announced the arrival of Endless Surf, its latest indoor surf technology, in Vietnam.

Endless Surf provides powerful and efficient waves that can be customised to the specific needs of a waterpark and the technology is being used as an amenity by Surf the Wave, a lifestyle and real estate development company in Vietnam. Surf the Wave is creating a large, mixed use community destination which is being hailed as Vietnam's "Silicon Valley" and will be located east of Ho Chi Minh City.

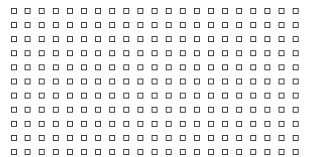
Talking about the decision to incorporate Endless Surf technology, Tony Bulcraig, CEO of Surf the Wave, said: "We've done a thorough analysis of the options and have concluded that Endless Surf offers both the best value and surf versatility, with a more natural aesthetic, that fits our development goals best. That it is backed by a company already experienced in large scale developments is important given the institutional investors involved."

Paul Chutter, joint founder of Endless Surf, commented: "This development is a great example of how surf as an anchor attraction in larger mixed-use real estate investments creates a focus on lifestyle and wellness for the entire development. This added benefit comes in addition to the surf lagoon being a healthy business venue in its own right because of the high capacity and flexibility of the programmable waves that Endless Surf offers."



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WATERPARKS



ADG wins WWA Leading Edge Award for Soaky Mountain Waterpark

AQUATIC Development Group (ADG), designer and builder of waterparks and water rides and attractions, has won a World Waterpark Association (WWA) Leading Edge Award for 2020.

The award is in recognition of ADG's design and build work for Soaky Mountain Waterpark in Tennessee, US. As well as building all the water features at the park, ADG assumed the role of construction manager for the full park build. Testament to the tenacity of ADG's construction team is the fact that Soaky Mountain was built during the wettest summer in Sevierville's history and through a global pandemic.

The new waterpark is home to the very latest in ride design innovations and a number of industry-first attractions. One standout attraction is the 35,000sq.ft Shorebreak Water Pool, featuring waves up to 6ft. high. Another is ADG's Tidal River, which stretches over 1,200ft. and boasts three inch roller waves. Both attractions are powered by WaveTek.

The \$90m waterpark also features a dual-Wibit inflatable water obstacle course, a flat-water cabana pool, a double FlowRider surf ride and a number of ProSlide water slides.

Jim Dunn, president of ADG, shared his delight at receiving the award, commenting: "We are incredibly proud to have won the Leading Edge Award for our work on Soaky Mountain. The Soaky Mountain Waterpark project really showcases all of our company's strengths."

Suntago Water World opens at Park of Poland

SUNTAGO Water World, hailed as the largest indoor waterpark in Poland, has opened as part of the first phase of the development of Park of Poland.

The venue covers an area of 67,000sq.m and is home to 18 swimming pools, 32 waterslides covering a distance of 3.2km, 10 saunas and luxury spas and a 40,000sq.m "tropical" garden with imported palm trees and other tropical plants. The waterpark features the longest waterslide in Europe, at 320m.

Suntago Water World can accommodate up to 10,000 people and visitors encounter three distinct tropical experiences in areas known as the Jamungo Water Jungle, Relax Suntago and the Saunaria Suntago. Heightening the tropical experience is the temperature of the park, which is set at 32 degrees Celsius.

Park of Poland is located near the town of Mszczonów, less than an hour's drive from Warsaw. It stretches over 190 acres and features a theme park, hotels, a shopping centre and conference venue, as well as Suntago Water World. According to the site's developers, Global City Holdings and Wund Group, when completed, Park of Poland will be the second largest entertainment complex in Europe.

WDW plans to reopen a waterpark in March 2021

WALT Disney World has announced it will open one of its two waterparks in March 2021. Both Blizzard Beach and Typhoon Lagoon waterparks have been closed since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Walt Disney World and its theme parks reopened in July 2020 but to date the company has not confirmed which of the waterparks will be reopening in the spring of next year.

In an update on its website, Walt Disney World said: "While Disney's Blizzard Beach waterpark and Disney's Typhoon Lagoon waterpark remain closed at this time, pending government approvals, we currently plan to reopen one of the two Disney waterparks on March 7, 2021.

"We may adjust our proposed reopening date and if that happens, we will let guests know what to expect in a future update," the statement concluded.



Huge indoor waterpark opens in Texas

KALAHARI Round Rock, hailed as one of the largest waterparks in the United States, opened on November 12.

The 223,000sq.ft waterpark features 30 waterslides and 20 pools and whirlpools. Other attractions include a FlowRider, an adult grotto swim-up bar, waterfalls and cabanas.

The park is the second largest indoor waterpark in the US, behind DreamWorks Water Park in New Jersey, which sits on a 370,260sq.ft site.

Kalahari Round Rock Resort is located just north of Austin, Texas. The 350 acre resort complex is home to five restaurants, 975 guest rooms and 10,000sq.ft of space for meetings, conventions and events.

22 life-size sculptures are scattered around the resort, including 12 elephants, seven zebras, a cape buffalo and a mother and baby rhinoceros. The huge sculptures are up to 10ft high and weigh as much as 10,000 pounds.





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WATERPARKS



Therme Group appoints UK leadership team

FOLLOWING approval to construct a £250m wellbeing resort in Manchester, UK, Therme Group has appointed a leadership team to drive the project on.

Therme Group specialises in creating wellbeing resorts around the world. It has completed highly successful projects across Europe for more than 20 years and prides itself in providing inclusive and affordable health and wellbeing opportunities to diverse communities.

Therme Manchester is due to open in 2023 and is set to become the largest all-season, water-based attraction in the world. The UK team that will oversee the project comprises Stelian Jacob, Adrian Ion, Anne-Marie Garner, Duncan Newbury, Richard Land and James Mark.

Stelian Jacob will act as CEO of Therme Group UK. He is also vice-president of Therme Group globally. Adrian Ion, who has broad experience in corporate and operational finance, has been appointed vice-president of corporate finance and CFO.

Anne-Marie Garner has more than 20 years' experience as general counsel and is joining the Therme Group team as vice-president of legal and corporate governance. Duncan Newbury is taking the role of vice-president of brand strategy and marketing director. Newbury is experienced in developing popular leisure and entertainment propositions and working with major venues.

Richard Land has been appointed as chief development officer, while James Mark is acting as chief operating officer and will be responsible for the strategic planning and tactical implementation of UK operations.

Dr. Robert Hanea, chairman and CEO of Therme Group, commented: "The exceptional UK leadership team will drive the rapid development of our UK projects. The team, each an expert in his or her field, are united in delivering Therme Group's vision of 'wellbeing for all'."

WWA40 connects water leisure professionals in its virtual show

THE World Waterpark Association (WWA) held its annual trade show virtually in 2020, the remote event seeing the association, sponsors, speakers, key volunteers and aquatics professionals from around the world connect, network and deliver presentations.

The three-day WWA40 Virtual Show programme featured a combination of live and pre-recorded educational sessions, as well as interactive workshops with industry professionals focused on numerous relevant topics.

There were eight Ask the Experts Q&A panels, seven live feature presentations, nine live hosted Connect & Chat sessions, 40 pre-recorded breakout sessions and three live General Session and Awards presentations.

Rick Root, president of WWA, said: "We were certainly disappointed that we couldn't bring our industry together for our in-person Symposium & Trade Show – something we've done for 40 years.

"However, from what we've seen so far, pivoting to a virtual show programme was just what our industry needed. Attendees from 17 countries have already spent thousands of hours watching all of the outstanding educational sessions offered by our industry thought leaders and we anticipate the interaction with our show programme to continue throughout the next few months."

Aleatha Ezra, director of park member development for the WWA, commented: "None of us have experienced a year quite like 2020 and we need to work closely together if we're going push through these uncharted waters.

"2021 will hold many unknowns for all of us, but we don't have to go into it alone. Our live sessions this year offered attendees the chance to bounce ideas off each other and gather new ways to operate more safely so that our guests feel good about coming back out to visit our parks," Ezra added.



Empex Watertoys introduces Aquabild line of water features

EMPEX Watertoys, manufacturer of equipment for waterparks, aquatic playgrounds, splash pads and spray parks for attraction sites around the world, has introduced a new line of products.

The Aquabild line has been designed in the spirit of building, moving and construction and was revealed at the grand opening of the Water Main waterpark at Diggerland USA. The venue is a construction-themed amusement park in Berlin, New Jersey, US, and is home to over 40 attractions for all ages, including Battle Trucks and a Barrel Train.

The waterplay features include pylons, stop lights, jackhammers, backhoes and construction signs. Like all Empex Watertoys' products, the Aquabild range has been built with non-ferrous materials and features the Empex Lifetime Corrosion warranty.

Empex Watertoys has been providing water toys and aquatic playground equipment since 1986. Using limited metal components which are much lighter than steel, the company's products come with a 30 year structural warranty and a lifetime guarantee against corrosion.





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Five principles to save your themed entertainment project

By Noble Coker



AFTER working with and for many companies that want to invest in themed entertainment, whether that be amusement parks, theme parks, waterparks, family entertainment centres or mixed-use resorts, I have witnessed a disturbing and regrettable trend of successful and intelligent people making very bad investments in this industry.

My hope and intent with this message is to share some pieces of wisdom that may help prevent some misinformed decisions when it comes to themed entertainment investments and maybe help people take a fresh perspective to their approach to investments in this industry.

The significant challenge with the industry is, it seems,

deceptively intuitive. In other words, most people looking at the industry from the outside can easily understand the financials, the sources of revenue streams, the design principles and the obvious enjoyment of the customers. Because the business model seems so obvious, many investors are deceived by its seeming simplicity into making a significant investment and only finding out when it is much too late how complex a business it is under its simplistic façade. The following five principles may seem very obvious, but I have seen each of them violated many times, resulting in poor products, poor experiences and always...terrible investment returns.

1. Revenue doesn't come from designers, it comes from customers

This seems very obvious. Ticket sales and secondary spend always come from the customers that enter your facility. However, in many cases, an investor will try to find the best creative talent or best architect to design their facility. The focus and emphasis is on the construction of the facility and appeal of the design. The implication is that a themed entertainment location is like an office building, or a residence. If it is visually appealing, it will get recognition and demand a premium.

The analogy isn't completely wrong, but the approach definitely isn't right. Creatives and designers (usually) have never operated a facility. Their success hasn't come from selling an ice cream cone to a child, or marketing a new entertainment event, or selling a ticket at a turnstile. They are not intimately familiar with your customer. They need to be given direction and that direction needs to be based on the customer you are targeting, but they don't know your customer.

Asking a creative to propose a design for a facility without giving them customer guidance is like asking an artist to paint a picture of your daughter, but never letting them see the child. If the artist is very skilled, they will paint

a beautiful picture, but the picture won't be your daughter! The point has been missed entirely, just like most themed entertainment designs miss the mark when they are not properly informed. You have to know your customer first – and this leads to my next principle...

2. 50 to 60-year-old men are not your customers!

Again, very obvious, right? I can't think of any themed entertainment attraction where the majority of the people I see walking around are men between the ages of 50 to 60-years-old. Yet, typically, the people making decisions on what is a "good" design, or a "good" marketing programme, or "good" content inside the facility are 50 to 60-year-old men. No wonder the facility isn't attractive to the customer! 50 to 60-year-old men like to build big coasters, they like loud music, they like big explosions and they like scantily clad women dancing around (we have to honestly face the problem if we want to fix it). But if your target customer isn't 50 to 60-year-old men, then they probably aren't as attracted to these things.

More likely than not, your target customer is 30 to 40-year-old women because they decide where the children





and the extended family go for a break and they don't like a single item listed above. The investors, designers and decision-makers have to accept that they do not understand their target customer, so they need to take the time and spend the money to both identify and understand the target customer so that the design and business model of visitation and repeat visitation can be based on what the customer is actually looking for. This then leads to principle #3...

3. If your business model is based on just getting everyone to visit once, you have already failed

How many times have you heard this statement: "If we can just get everyone in the area to visit once, we will be busy for years!" Again, deceptively simple. You look at a geographic area, assess the population, then assume a penetration rate and Viola! You have a successful business! It *never* works that way, especially in our modern business environment. Yes, a themed entertainment location can get good visitation for a year or two with snappy marketing or aggressive pricing, but then that initial surge dies off. Why? Because the product isn't repeatable. After people have visited, they share through social media what they thought and then no matter how aggressively you price, or how great your marketing is, you can't overcome the "collective boredom" of the social media crowd. The facility wasn't designed with the customer in mind and with an idea of how or why the customer would want to come back.

If the facility and business model isn't built on a foundation of very high levels of repeat visitation, the business is destined to failure because if a significant number of people aren't willing to come back then, thanks to social media, an even larger number of potential customers won't be willing to come even once. That means flexibility needs to be built into both the design and the business plan that will allow frequent additions and refreshes so that the target customers are looking forward to coming back to see what's new. And that leads us to principle #4...

4. Deciding on content that brings people back isn't like shopping in a grocery store

The following is a discussion I had with a senior leader in a company that was building a themed entertainment facility:

Me: "So tell me, how did you decide on the equipment and content that is inside your facility?"

Him: "We chose the most popular equipment."

Me: "How did you decide what was the most popular?"

Him: "We visited five different parks and we recorded every attraction they had. Then we selected the attractions that appeared in most of the parks."

This is a real conversation about a facility that this organisation was spending hundreds of millions of US dollars on. This leader had gone around to other parks, made a list of attractions based on what the other parks had chosen and then went out "grocery shopping," or basically going to ride vendors and saying "I'll take one of those and one of those and two of those" until his list was complete. Now, besides this violating every other principle that I have listed above, besides ignoring the need for differentiation to set his product apart, this also highlights the belief that attractions are just something to do and have no business value.



The reality is each attraction has a target customer and a business purpose. Maybe that purpose is to increase length of stay so that secondary spending will increase. Maybe that purpose is to promote a particular character to increase merchandise sales. Maybe the purpose is to appeal to teenage boys to broaden the demographic reach. Regardless, every piece of content and every attraction has to be researched and specifically positioned to support the success of the overall business model. This is key to repeat visitation. This and how people “feel” when they are in your facility. And this is my final principle...

5. Customer comfort is determined by culture, not by rules

It's interesting that when you survey people after they leave a themed entertainment facility, they can rate the attractions high, the food as good, the cleanliness as impressive, but when asked if they intend to return, they will say they probably won't. You can then dig into the data and consistently find that they rated “feeling welcome” or “safety” as very low. It's easy to understand. If we don't feel welcome in someone's home, we don't return. If we don't feel safe in driving with someone, we avoid driving with them again. You can see this in many themed entertainment facilities around the world. They have spent heavily on the “hardware,” but they missed the mark on the “software” and their business suffers because of it.

This failure of making people feel welcome or safe is typically due to an assumption that procedures and rules can define behaviour. This isn't true. Procedures and rules can define boundaries for decisions that the operations people can make, but they don't define their behaviour. That is why the front-line people can follow every rule and still the customer doesn't feel welcome or safe.

What defines behaviour is culture and what defines culture is purpose. Meaning, typically organisations spend a significant amount of time defining and training their teams on the rules, but rarely do they spend an equal amount of time defining and educating people on their purpose. Why are we doing this role? Why are we working here? Why are you a leader? What does it mean to be a leader? These are the kind of questions that if well understood, will define the behaviour of an organisation and by extension make customers feel welcome and safe when they are with you.

Making investments fun again

Looking back, most can see how obvious these principles are, but hindsight isn't valuable if the mistake has already



been made. I hope this can help some that are making decisions now to make some simple adjustments to ensure a much better experience in investing in themed entertainment. By remembering these five simple principles – 1) Don't assume you know your customer but spend the time to identify and understand what they are looking for; 2) Feed that information into your decision-making instead of relying on other 50 to 60-year-old men; 3) Build your business models and designs on repeat visitation; 4) Make sure every part of the content of your facility has a purpose and is aligned with the business model; and 5) Make sure that people feel welcome and safe by investing in helping employees and their leaders understand their purpose as well as procedures and rules – we can end the waste of time and resources that has too often defined new investments in our industry – and then we can all get back to having FUN!

About the author

With more than 20 years of theme park and business management experience, Noble Coker now leads an international team of multi-disciplinary designers, project planners and professional operation managers at Apex Parks and Entertainment Services (APES). Coker started his career as a business management consultant for Price Waterhouse. He transitioned to Walt Disney Imagineering and worked in the parks division of The Walt Disney company for 16 years, ultimately leading park operations for Hong Kong Disneyland. He endeavoured to set up the parks business division within Wanda and then transitioned to teaching at the University of Southern California. Eventually, he was brought back to the themed entertainment industry by the opportunity to establish a world-class business services organisation based out of Asia.

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Zheng Wei
HUACHUANG



Tian Enming
SHANGHAIBODE

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JUDGE PANEL



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ATLANTIS



Li Kehui
HAPPY VALLEY



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SUNAC RESORT



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Li Mingdi
SUNAC RESORT



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HB WORLD



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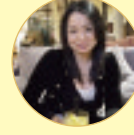
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DREAMEAST



Zhang Li
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Ye Jianping
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Li Yanchan
WINSING ANIMATION



Qin Xi
LEWA ADVENTURE



Yuan Man
Hengdian World
Studios

The sky's the limit!

Flying Theatres have become a popular attraction, notably over the past decade, with a host of standalone examples opening up around the world and others becoming part of the entertainment offering at parks and other venues. Providing a unique experience for riders, today the Flying Theatre market offers a much wider range of options than it did originally for those looking to add such an attraction, while examples at a lower price level have also been introduced to bring this type of attraction into the reaches of many more operators and owners. Here we look at some of the products currently available and discuss the market with some of the key suppliers of Flying Theatres involved in the global marketplace.



Simworx

Entering the Flying Theatre market was fairly inevitable for UK company Simworx. Having a diverse range of media based attractions meant that the company already had the expertise to develop this type of ride system.

However, Flying Theatre manufacturers already had a foothold in the market "so we wanted to find a new angle that would help us to stand out from our competitors," noted CEO Terry Monkton. "This resulted

in the development of our Mini Flying Theatre, specifically designed to offer the same Flying Theatre experience as larger, similar attractions, but at a price point and footprint to appeal to small to medium sized operators."

The ride offers an hourly capacity of up to 250 and is capable of seating 20 or 24 people at a time over two rows, with the seats all mounted on a central structure. A big advantage of the Mini Flying Theatre is the ability for guests to board the ride from the floor, meaning there are no big infrastructure costs for operators in terms of building lifts, stairs or wall reinforcements, a definite selling point.

The first installation of the Mini Flying Theatre was at Bao Son Paradise Park in Hanoi, Vietnam. Its headlining media Fly Over Vietnam was a film specially commissioned for the

project and lasts just under 10 minutes. Guests experience movements perfectly synchronised to the on-screen content, including a programmable tilt, combined with the seats moving forwards and backwards, while the sensation of flying is enhanced with rider's legs dangling freely below them. In addition to the motion synchronisation, the attraction is fully interfaced to projection and sound systems and uses custom show reels on a digital format AV solution.

An array of special effects is available on the Simworx Mini Flying Theatre, while the company also looks at how it can improve the storytelling experience through the use of theming, pre-shows and narrative driven media.

The main markets for the Mini Flying Theatre are the small to medium sized theme park and high-end family entertainment centre sectors, along with zoos, museums and aquariums.

"Moving forward we'll probably begin to see operators looking to break the trend a bit and look for more narrative driven content, so the experience is less passive and visitors feel more immersed in a storyline, which will be more fitting for theme parks as storytelling is one of their main goals with any new attraction," Monkton notes. "4D Cinemas were relatively new 15 years ago, but have become a staple attraction for every theme park worldwide now. We believe the same will be true for the Flying Theatres.

"For future developments, we'll continue to see improvements in motion dynamics, special effects integration and screen/projection techniques as technology advances. But we may also begin to see elements from our other favourite media-based attractions incorporated into Flying Theatres, such as interactivity," he adds.

Mini Flying Theatre



Full Turnkey Solutions

20 Seat Units

Integrated AV Systems

Complete Show Control

Programmable Heave

Programmable Tilt

Optional Effects

Cutting Edge Ride Technology

DUAL OPTION AVAILABLE



simworx®
robocoaster
Media Based Attractions



Brogent

Headquartered in Taiwan, Brogent Technologies supplies the i-Ride Flying Theatres, a leading attraction in the market for the last decade with more than 20

installations completed on four continents.

In 2019 the company introduced the new m-Ride Flying Theatre which opened at Legoland Florida and there are six more installations on track to open in the 2021 season alone. Brogent's theatres offer an excellent flying experience by synchronising smooth and agile, wide ranging movements to highly impressive content.

"Our theatres can be found in operation in Asia, Australia, Europe and North America," Brogent's Stefan Rothaug told *InterPark*. "We offer both the i-Ride premium solution theatre that delivers a market leading experience

and the m-Ride theatre that delivers an unforgettable Flying Theatre experience for tighter spaces and budgets."

And the company has a number of new projects and concepts on the way.

"We can't wait to show you the new projects and concepts we have in our pipeline," Rothaug stated. "Recently, media based attractions are switching to laser projection. Technology is evolving steadily and we as a supplier of integrated, high technology systems benefit from this a lot. We will let you know more about technological leaps with new projects, once our clients allow us to announce them to the public.

"It's a young product with only 20 years of history," Rothaug adds, "but we are convinced that it is an evergreen attraction right up there with roller coasters, giant wheels and merry-go-rounds. A must have for every theme park, because there is no better family attraction that has a broader appeal."



Simtec

For German company Simtec Systems its best-selling Flying Theatre is the HEXaFLITE 72, most examples of which have been installed in China. Due to the high capacity needs in most of the installation locations in Chinese theme parks, Simtec has in some cases installed two systems, back to back.

The product features a dynamic, 6DOF motion system with large cylinders capable of creating a real feeling of flying and offers a single loading level to maximise throughput with minimal staffing. It also provides a central seating position in the centre of the screen, while due to the fact that every guest is placed on a single platform turning around the same axis as the camera movement, the company states that the risk of people feeling motion sickness is minimal compared to multiple platform systems. Integrated special effects such as wind, scent and spray,

along with a spherical LED wall, are also available.

As noted, many of Simtec's Flying Theatre attractions have been installed in China, due to the booming amusement industry in Asia. "But we will see our Flying Theatres also in other parts of the world in the near future," a company spokesperson says, adding: "Simtec is one of the leading manufacturers in the field of Flying Theatres worldwide. With our integrated 6DOF motion systems we have proven to simulate the real feeling of flying."

In 2019 Simtec presented its new HEXaFLITE 2.0 concept. This new design incorporates technology which has been proven over many years and combines the features of a traditional open cabin simulator with a Flying Theatre. Additionally, newly developed features enhance the experience further. For example, the new system design allows for full motion starting in the loading position and throughout the entire tilt process into the show position. As an option, the seats can be tilted backwards while the system platform remains in the loading position in order to direct the guests' view to an extended screen in the ceiling area, giving them the impression of looking into the sky (i.e. a rocket launch simulation). The system capacity is between 20 and 72 seats and it is available as a turnkey attraction.

Simtec has been contracted by a Chinese client developing a major entertainment project to manufacture the first HEXaFLITE 2.0 system as a 48-seater. This significant project is scheduled to go live at the beginning of 2022.

DOF Robotics

With its head office in Turkey, DOF Robotics' current best-selling Flying Theatre is the MLP. The product was developed using a 2DOF suspended seat module with the possibility to use 6DOF as well. The Explorer platform is used to push the guests' seats towards a large domed screen, taking them straight into the action and allowing them to be part of the storyline thanks to the high-quality motion simulator and VR content. Additionally, a wide selection of special effects such as water, rain, smell and many more are available to enhance the experience further.

Launched in October 2019, the DOF Flying Theatre LS is the company's highest selling product thanks to its lifting system concept that makes it a small-scale platform mixed with a large-format projection screen. It is suitable for infinite locations and it doesn't require too much space compared to the large-scale Flying Theatre MLP. A recent project was a 24-seat Flying Theater LS with a 10m wide dome screen in Uzbekistan, Tashkent.

The company's Mirsat Satis notes that it seems clear Flying Theatre installations are not only on the rise in the theme park industry but also in different entertainment sectors, such as FECs. Additionally, Flying Theatres have

become one of the most popular ways to promote cities and countries, to show and impress with beautiful destinations, he feels.

So how has the company enhanced the immersive feeling provided by its Flying Theatres?

"Technology has made it possible for tourist attractions around the world to have access to all kinds of Flying Theatre experiences and they have come a long way in terms of design and motion quality in recent years," says Satis. "However, today's market is looking for more than a high-quality motion simulator. Customers are always looking for more evolved and immersive experiences. We have made a huge improvement in our content production, projection, special effects and theming options to create a ride system that is able to captivate and entertain people of all ages."

And Satis continued: "I think most theme parks and operators understand now that if they don't already have a Flying Theatre, they should be adding one very soon. It seems clear that the Flying Theatre is the big thing in the world of virtual reality immersive experiences. But the real challenge for today's VR is how we can enhance the learning experience of our Flying Theatres."





Triotech

"Triotech has two main Flying Theatre products, The Flyer, developed by Triotech, and the Birdy, developed by CL Corporation (CL Corp. is a division of Triotech based in France)," the company's Christian Martin tells *InterPark*. "One of the important advantages we offer is a competitive price. Most clients are sensitive to the cost and as we don't have a heavy mechanical structure, our price is attractive and can be less expensive than other suppliers."

A recent installation of The Flyer was at Pier 39 in San Francisco, USA. This is set on the pier situated on the harbour front. It has a capacity of 28 guests per cycle and the seats are stacked vertically, immersing every guest into the action.

"It is a unique attraction for the rapidly growing 'flying experience' rides sector because of five unique features," Martin explains, "these being content in 3D or 2D, including flying not only 'over' but also under and through elements, no platform, motion range, computer generated images combined with live footage and immersion, with special effects and an animated pre-show."

Triotech's main markets for its Flying Theatres are parks and location-based entertainment venues in high tourist areas such as San Francisco, New York and Shanghai. This is achieved through the scaling of the product, or adaptation, to feature different capacities.

"For instance, we can even do a 24 or 28 seat Flying Theatre which is smaller but is less expensive and most importantly, can fit in many smaller venues," explains Martin. "We can also make larger ones. This is unique and even gives family entertainment centres and shopping malls more choice and flexibility."

"The main immersive feelings provided by our Flying Theatres come from the ride itself of course," Martin continued. "However, it is important to realise that the entire experience can be used to enhance immersion. This means the building and its architecture, the décor and theming, etc."

"Flying theatres are a growing segment and we see more and more of them, even outside of theme parks," he concluded.



DyMoRides

"Our best-selling product is the Flyboard Flying Theatre," says Andreas Kornprobst at German company DyMoRides.

"In this version of the Flying Theatre, guests enter the ride vehicle first standing up straight and then lean comfortably forward onto a support device in a pitch angle of 12-17 degrees forward. Once the show starts, the ride system moves into a forward pitch position where the guests enjoy an extremely immersive flying experience."

"There are two factors which work together to create this close-to-reality flying feeling," Kornprobst continued. "One is the guests' standing/semi prone position during the show, where they automatically actively participate in the movement of the ride vehicle by shifting their weight according to the motion. The second is DyMoRides' patented motion system, which creates precise movements from super-smooth to highly exciting – without shaking and rattling the guests as is the case on many ball screw-systems."

The Flyboard Flying Theatre offers capacities ranging from 16 to 60 persons so is suitable for both large theme parks and smaller venues. According to Kornprobst, operators of smaller venues have a number of requirements such as a desire for the same intensity and level of immersion

as large Flying Theatres, less space and weight than the big panoramic Flying Theatres, high hourly capacity, high reliability (with minimal down time), low maintenance and regular operating costs and excellent ROI.

Accordingly, the company's main focus markets aside from theme parks are stand-alone attractions in retail and leisure destinations, stand-alone attractions at cultural and natural sites as well as historical hotspots, entertainment centres in retail and leisure destinations, FECs, museums and zoos.

Besides developing the standing/semi prone flying position for guests on the ride, DyMoRides has recently put much effort into media development which has seen the company working on perfecting the optical and acoustic illusion of flying. At the same time, enhancing the accuracy of the motion-system and the motion control system was at the centre of its technical development. The next step is to implement augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) into the Flying Theatres.

And looking to the future and how the Flying Theatre market may develop, Kornprobst comments: "We think that the trend will go towards augmented storytelling and personalised flying adventures, so that no adventure is exactly the same twice. Also, the virtual and augmented techniques to realise this approach are developing fast. The current Corona-crisis drives digitalisation even faster."

V & P Rides

"Our Flying Theatres have two main features that set them apart," explained Herbert Gall at V & P Rides. "Firstly, there is the standing position of the riders, allowing for a high degree of physical and emotional involvement. The second feature is a unique motion drive that uses steel cables instead of a hydraulic system, resulting in a very smooth movement of the platform."

"Due to the patented motion system our models have a small footprint, ideal for venues with limited space available. An array of strong special effects and several options for content display are further strong points."

The company offers two product models, the E-Motionboard for 39 riders and the smaller E-Motioncube for 13 to 18 passengers. Currently it is involved in a project in the Shanghai area of China as well as two more projects in China.

"Our attractions are designed to meet international safety standards, while we also hold patents in the USA and China," Gall continued. "Like most of the suppliers in our industry we have a strong focus on the Asian market. We offer our Flying Theatres as a quality attraction for amusement parks, waterparks, FECs, science centres and similar venues with an array of realistic special effects and several options for content display."

"Due to the standing position on our platforms the passengers are physically more immersed than if they were in a seated position. And we are permanently working on the creation of new special effects to add to the existing portfolio (wind, scent, drop effect, vibration, water spray and fog)."

"Another area that has a lot of potential is 'interaction.' Especially in combination with VR or AR technology this offers an additional feature for our attractions. We have also just completed the engineering of a 'water resistant' version of our E-Motioncube model for use in waterparks."

Gall feels Flying Theatres are ideal attractions for the whole family and as such they should be part of a standard ride programme for theme parks.

"In regions with extreme temperatures the product can be positioned as an indoor attraction, preferably in combination with other revenue centres like shops or restaurants," he says. "Though we believe in the entertainment value of a high quality 2D projection with a good sound system, we recognise the potential for the future in VR and especially AR technology. We also expect rider interaction to become more important in the coming years."





Candymonium brings tasty new thrills to Hersheypark's Chocolatetown

By David Whitworth

THIS year, Hersheypark, the family theme park located in Hershey, Pennsylvania, US, opened its doors to a new themed area. Known as Chocolatetown, this newly developed section of the park tugs at nostalgia with its link to the Hershey Chocolate company. Constructed at a cost of \$150m, the brand new themed area of Hersheypark covers an area of 23 acres in total and represents the venue's biggest expansion to date. The park has gone all out with this significant investment!



The centerpiece of Chocolatetown is the new steel hyper coaster Candymonium. The attraction was a key aspect for the development of the area and represents the latest version of this breed of adrenaline thrill ride. After two years of development, the coaster was officially opened on July 3.

Vikki Hultquist, Hersheypark's general manager, said of this latest landmark attraction: "From the distinctive Hershey's candy theme that welcomes guests, to our sweetest coaster Candymonium, this is an experience that can only exist in Hersheypark. We are so excited to welcome our guests to Hershey's Chocolatetown and debut Candymonium as part of our summer opening weekend."

Designed by Swiss manufacturer Bolliger & Mabillard, Candymonium stands at a towering 210ft (54m), which is the tallest ride at Hersheypark. The American theme park continues to smash its own records with its brand new roller coaster becoming its fastest to date – the ride racing along the track at a top speed of 76mph (122km/h). The length of Candymonium spans an impressive 4636ft (1,413m), also becoming the park's longest roller coaster. The ride covers seven acres of Chocolatetown in total as Candymonium brings pandemonium to Hersheypark.

In terms of the ride's carriages, Candymonium runs with a capacity of three trains, each with seven cars. In total, 28 riders are seated with four people in each row of the carriage. There is a front security latch system securing guests while onboard, which is fitted with handlebars, and as per its theme, they are draped in chocolate brown.

A novel touch lies in the fact the ride embraces Hershey's history, with each of the candy-themed trains displaying the names of Hershey's popular brands of bites – Kisses candies, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and Twizzler's twists. This is also reflected at the rides entrance with red, orange and blue style carpets all bearing the colours of the company's snack range.

The aspect of theming is clearly vital to the attraction and extends to its queuing area too. Clearly visible on large signage displays are various delicacies from the Hershey brand. It is a case of "Fun meets Chocolate" as the park's tagline certainly lives up to its expectation on the theming front. In keeping with the narrative of the park's ties to its famous food brand, Candymonium is painted chocolate brown to complement its milk-white pillars, giving an appropriate aesthetic style.

Once guests are onboard the ride itself, Hersheypark's latest thriller provides an exciting journey lasting two minutes and 26 seconds. After the first main drop, which has an angle of 77.3 degrees, the ride shoots along an airtime hill over Spring Creek with a drop of 169ft (52m). After a change of direction through a hammerhead turn, Candymonium traverses over a camelback hill as the track winds its way through Spring Creek again. Overall there are seven camelback hills which fit into Candymonium's pulsating ride, giving a whole lot of airtime to its enthused riders in an adrenaline-filled ride experience.

The attraction twists and turns with a flowing rhythm and from above, you can get to sample the great views of Hersheypark's countryside and water features. The track continues to flow through a path of helixes, banks and another airtime hill and further weaves its way across the park before arrowing its way to the finish and ride station. But not before it hits its most eye catching section.

Detailing the ride further, Vikki Hultquist first described the park's latest addition in her own words. "As soon as guests enter through the front gate, they are greeted by our world-class coaster Candymonium making a panoramic 270 degree banked curve which sweeps around an iconic Kisses fountain that serves as the heartbeat of the area. We were able to leverage The Hershey Company's unique candy brands and assemble the finest ingredients to create

a one-of-a-kind hyper coaster that sets records for us at Hersheypark."

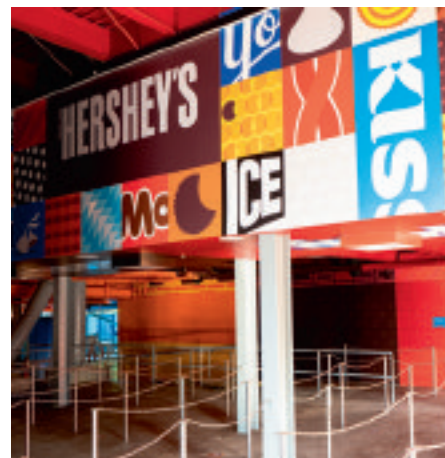
On why manufacturer Bolliger & Mabillard was chosen to supply Candymonium, she notes: "In bringing together our plans for Hershey's Chocolatetown and our desire to make a statement as guests arrive, we specifically approached B&M about this project. We asked them to deliver on a thrilling, only-in-Hershey experience. For us, that meant a hyper coaster spanning seven acres through our all-new region of Hersheypark that our guests will love and seek to ride countless times.

"B&M is a leader in the industry and known for making thrilling and smooth coasters. We had a successful partnership with them in 1998 when we added Great Bear to our coaster line up. We were confident that they would deliver another incredible attraction – and that they did!"

So what exactly were the complexities of building a modern day thrill ride like Candymonium and what challenges did the project face?

"Overall, the construction, testing and commissioning of Candymonium were smooth and efficient. Our teams were certainly challenged when construction was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We remained on track thanks to our construction experts and our trusted partner in B&M. In fact, the first run of Candymonium occurred just one day after construction resumed from our stay-at-home orders.

"The biggest change was the shift of our exciting culinary offerings to 2021 as construction was halted given state mandates from March 20 to May 1. Our construction and operations team worked tirelessly to implement new safety enhancements as we opened July 4 weekend.



Project profile



"While we couldn't have predicted the impact of COVID-19 on our operations for summer 2020, our new region was always designed to give us the blessing of space. Our previous front gate was located on a 25ft wide midway. The walkway to our new front gate is a comfortable 165ft wide which then opens to an entry area that grows to almost 250ft, so we increased our entry space 10 fold. We now have over a full acre of open gathering space on both sides of the gate."

And did the park remove anything to make way for the new attraction and facilities?

"Hershey's Chocolatetown activates 23 acres of new space west of the original park boundary. The \$150m expansion utilised a portion of this new land for development in addition to 12 reimagined acres from the previous tram drop off, entry experience (known locally as Tudor Village) and old front gate areas (known as Lower Rhineland). No existing rides were removed.

"The new region, like much of Hersheypark, is built around Spring Creek. In fact, Candymonium crosses over Spring Creek 10 times. In constructing Hershey's Chocolatetown, it was a top priority to ensure the environmental integrity of the space. Our incredible team of engineers and landscaper contractors added 368 new trees and 2,631 shrubs along the banks of Spring Creek, as well as channel improvements including six rock vanes to improve stream hydrology and create habitat."

Candymonium fits snugly into the newly developed Chocolatetown. The area includes a 10,000sq.ft. retail centre called Hersheypark Supply Co., a shopping facility which houses clothing, gifts and toys all exclusive to the park. Chocolatetown also has a smart and sleek theme, as Hultquist noted of Hersheypark's upgraded entrance.

"Our reimagined arrival experience offers a unique sense of place with both subtle and obvious nods to the vision and legacy of Milton S. Hershey. Guests are welcomed to the new area by beautiful brick buildings that feature historic architectural elements thoughtfully selected to reflect Mr. Hershey's style and a one-of-a-kind Kiss-shaped bell hung on a beam signed by students of the Milton Hershey School."

Chocolatetown's novelty is also incorporated in the shape of a giant compass. "As guests approach the all-new front gate with our iconic pinwheel on top, they are





All images
courtesy
Hersheypark

invited to literally walk through the history rooted in the town of Hershey from the the ground up. A Compass Rose with 22 bronze medallions honours key periods of Mr. Hershey's lasting architectural, cultural and philanthropic contributions with a glance in any direction revealing the current or previous location of the Hershey landmarks he created in the community he loved," says Hultquist.

Chocolatetown also gives a welcome debut to the famous coffee chain Starbucks, which features for the first time at Hersheypark. And the area continues to pack a punch with the creation of a new virtual reality experience called Hyperdeck.

The new focal point of Hersheypark indeed links the new to the old with its fabled 100-year-old attraction Carrousel, moved from Founder's Way to the newest area of the park. The ride's description reads "The Carrousel will reflect the personality of its new setting while still preserving its original historic charm."

According to Hultquist: "We moved our 101-year-old Carrousel to a place of prominence in the area and into a new pavilion designed to harken back to its setting in the 1940s. We still have each of the 66 hand-carved horses from The Philadelphia Toboggan Company's 1919 carrousel for generations to enjoy. Several of the horses are unique to Hersheypark – including one that showcases our pinwheel logo. Guests looking closely will also see a very special horse that is painted chocolate brown and gold in honour of the Milton Hershey School and featuring an image of Milton Hershey."

Plans are also afoot for further facilities which are scheduled to open in 2021 as Chocolatetown continues to

expand. Hersheypark is already pleased with the reaction to Hershey's Chocolatetown, "which has been universally positive, especially among coaster enthusiasts who praise Candymonium as one of the best B&M coasters in operation," says Hultquist. "We look forward to introducing new F&B offerings inspired by the vision of chocolate entrepreneur and founder Milton S. Hershey, in 2021. These include The Chocolatier Restaurant, Bar and Patio, the largest themed restaurant in Hershey with one-of-a-kind views of Hersheypark and Candymonium; Milton's Ice Cream Parlour with personal Ice Creamologists serving up exclusive ice cream creations; and The Sweeterie, a new scratch confectionery kitchen.

"Hershey's Chocolatetown is a transformational expansion and the largest investment in our company's history. Our outlay on this project involves 23 acres and 15 marque elements for our guests to enjoy for years to come. A foundational element of the project was to connect the newly developed area to Hershey's history and the legacy of our founder by continuing to bring people together for happiness, fun and of course, chocolate. We wanted to design an area for our guests that represents the place where fun meets chocolate in more ways than ever before," explained Hultquist on why Chocolatetown was introduced.

Returning to Hersheypark's new flagship attraction, billed as "the world's sweetest coaster," Candymonium flies along at a smooth pace for its riders and promises thrills and spills in abundance. The attraction represents the latest American adventure at Hersheypark and a ride even the great Willy Wonka himself would be proud to experience.

Max & Moritz twin coasters bring more family fun to Efteling



JUNE 20 this year saw the opening of a major new attraction at Efteling in The Netherlands when Max & Moritz made its official debut.

Geared towards children aged between four and 10 years old, and from 1m in height, but also being suitable for the whole family, the “powered” coaster adds another adventure to Efteling’s varied attraction offering and replaces the popular Bob (Bobsleigh) ride which had operated since 1985.

Max & Moritz is a double roller coaster with two tracks on which two trains ride in opposite directions, meeting each other twice during the experience. The attraction is a new type of ride for Efteling and the trains are electrically powered, so the speed can vary and gravity does not play a role. Visitors get to choose which track to ride – Max (blue) or Moritz (green) – and each provides its own exciting experience with sharp curves and accelerations.

The new coaster is themed on the well-known German poem by Wilhelm Busch from 1865, *Max und Moritz*, about two naughty schoolboys of the same name. In Efteling, they live in a small village with their mother Frau Schmetterling, who makes special cuckoo clocks. Her sons drive the villagers to despair with their tricks and when Frau Schmetterling locks up Max and Moritz as punishment in her cuckoo clock workshop, they try to escape with self-built soap boxes. Efteling visitors can now escape with them!

Commenting on the new attraction, Efteling CEO Fons Jurgens said: “After saying goodbye to the iconic Bobsleigh ride last year, young visitors to Max & Moritz will be able to share their first roller coaster experience with the whole



family. It is a very contemporary and real Efteling ride, based on the German poem about the rascals Max and Moritz. During the ride and in the surrounding area, visitors will find out about Max and Moritz's tricks and mischief."

Max & Moritz was built by Mack Rides and represents a total investment of €15m. Designed by Robert-Jaap Jansen, each train provides 38 seats and both make two laps of the 300m long tracks. Maximum speed is approximately 36km/h but due to the sharp curves and the angle of the bends, the trains appear to travel faster than this.

The whole area around the ride was redesigned and themed in less than a year and now features an alpine landscape with conifers, a small lake and green hills. The total surface area of Max & Moritz, as bounded by Fabula, Spookslot, Seylend Fregat and Frau Boltes Küche, is approximately 8,850sq.m. Additionally, a new catering establishment at the Max & Moritz Square, Frau Bolte's Küche, was also opened, serving French fries, snacks and chicken bites.

Another key element of the attraction is that the ride and the station building are heated without using gas. When the trains slow down, the energy released is fed back into the electricity grid and this is used to drive the coasters.

There are two queue lines, those for single riders and a family lane, while there is also an entrance for visitors with



disabilities. Guests make a choice between the Max train and the Moritz train in the queue lines. The music of Max & Moritz was composed by René Merkelbach.

As noted, the new ride replaced the iconic Bob attraction, also built by Mack, and which had been a popular ride for over 30 years at Efteling. As park communications and PR representative Karin Koppelmans told *InterPark*: "Roller coasters like the Bobsleigh are no longer supplied. In the coming years, investments and adjustments would be needed for the maintenance and operation of the ride. Unfortunately, this made replacement inevitable.





"For many visitors the Bob was their first roller coaster experience and in Max & Moritz, geared especially towards families with children between four and 10-years-old, with a height of 1m or more, children can ride a real roller coaster together with their family for the first time."

The thinking behind adding a double coaster came about from a wish for a large capacity ride and the fact that this "gave a nice angle to tell the story, like many other rides in Efteling," Koppelmans noted, adding: "Max & Moritz is a

powered coaster that complements our various attraction offers nicely. For Efteling it is a new kind of attraction with a very different ride experience to "regular" roller coasters. The trains are electrically powered, so we can play with the speed since gravity does not play a role.

"Each track has its own exciting experience with sharp curves and accelerations, so our visitors can choose and ride it twice to have the whole experience. Mack Rides was able to deliver a high quality powered coaster, with a large capacity. Our design and development employees have worked closely with Mack to implement all our wishes in terms of form and themes."

Koppelmans also explained that the main challenge of constructing the new attraction was working in the middle of the park in a small, shielded area during the park's opening hours, but added: "We worked well together and made agreements with all partners, which helped well with the (ride's) progress and implementation."

Max & Moritz is another excellent addition to Efteling and although a very different experience will clearly be a fine replacement for the well-known Bobsleigh ride which served the park so well. It is yet another magical, story-led attraction that will complement the park's other rides and facilities for many years to come.





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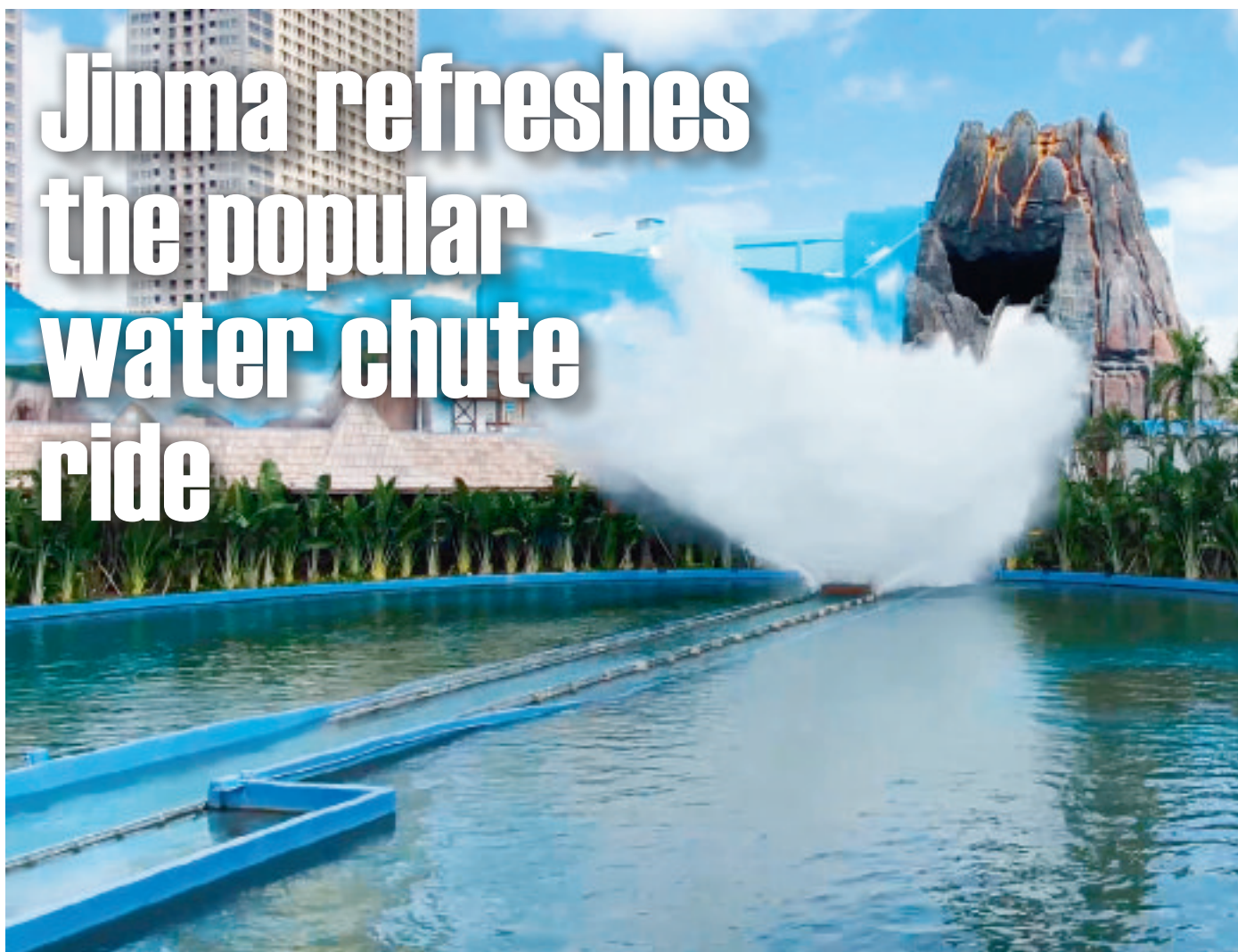
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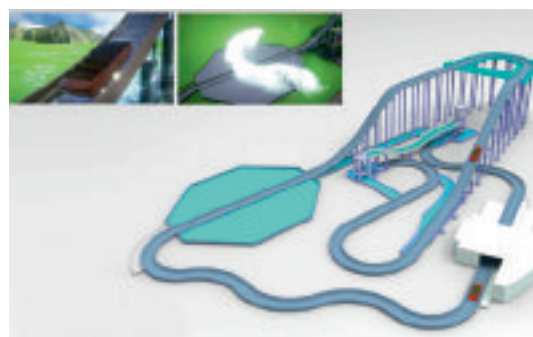
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Jinma refreshes the popular water chute ride

WATER chute rides currently available on the market feature many of the familiar elements that attract visitors. If you happen to have ridden one, you will know what we are talking about – ascending slopes, floating along a while and then splashing down into the finale.

Of course, those features are good enough to persuade new visitors to fork out a few bills and have some fun, at



least for a while. But then some may never consider taking another ride again, because they have done it and know what it is all about. That means reduced repeat riders and possibly reduced repeat visits.

Jinma and other ride suppliers know that something new is desperately needed on the market so that the overall ride attraction can be dramatically enriched and thus appeal to both first-time riders as well as repeat riders.

That is why Jinma, a leading amusement ride supplier in China, has invested resources to design and develop new elements as add-ons to the conventional water chute ride.

Jinma's new design boasts a vertical lift tower, a drop tower and reverse dives in between. This well thought-out design, physically occupying a very small portion of the whole attraction, allows the injection of some exciting novelties and plenty of thrills into the ride experience.

Following dispatch, passengers aboard the gondola take in the surrounding scenery along the water chute before heading into the lift tower vehicle. Locked in, the lift takes the gondola to a designed height and then releases the locking mechanism for the gondola to move backwards into the elevated chute section. This is where the back-dive experience begins. Now looking backwards, passengers are oblivious to what lies ahead (or behind!).

After a few bumps and dives, the reverse dive section ends with the gondola entering the drop tower once again, still travelling backwards. With the gondola secured in place, the tower abruptly "drops" it down, providing passengers with an intense airtime experience. After safely "landing," the gondola is released from the lift tower locking device to head into the rest of the ride journey.

These new features not only bring in new points of attraction to the water chute ride, they also provide a physical framework for the possible incorporation of other fun elements too, such as media-based features and special effects. The towers can also be easily themed and equipped to create an immersive setting.

Jinma has patented this design in both China and the US and debuted it on a chute ride in 2019 at Sunac Park Guangzhou. This particular attraction is partially themed into a cave and stream. Within the cave section, multimedia elements are introduced to create an immersive and enchanting setting. It was an instant hit and became a favourite ride at the park for many visitors. Currently, Jinma is working on a second example of the attraction for another well-known theme park in central China. Based on the success of the first version, Jinma is confidently assuming that the second will also be a big success with park visitors.



Red Raion's Black Hole CGI movie explores new space territory

By Michael Mascioni

Image courtesy Red Raion

SPACE-themed attractions have been one of the most common attractions in the leisure market. As a result, there seems to be almost a surfeit of such attractions, making it difficult sometimes to discern marked innovations in terms of the experiences. Now, Red Raion is set on taking this genre in new directions with *Black Hole - The Multiverse War*, a four minute CGI movie designed to offer new levels of immersiveness.

As Federico Laudani, the company's co-founder and creative director put it, "When we decided to produce a space movie, we were determined to go far beyond the usual space titles available on the market and create a revolutionary immersive experience that could lead guests across different dimensions. That's why *Black Hole - The Multiverse War* is not an ordinary space title but a futuristic adventure that takes place in outer space and transports you to other unexpected, parallel universes.

"To get a better idea of this adventure, try to imagine yourself as the last survivor of a dreadful war against space creatures known as Scalpvengers; you are alone, floating in space and all you can do is survive until, hopefully, someone comes to rescue you. Adrenaline kicks in, your pulse speeds up, your skin tingles with the thrill and then, in a matter of seconds, a funny rescue robot shows up to guide you back to your space fleet – but that's not going to be easy.

"In order to arrive there safe and sound, you will need to cross several black holes that expand to other mind-blowing dimensions, where your enemies will intercept you and do everything they can to keep you from reaching your allies!"

Laudani calls attention to the special immersiveness of the attraction. "*Black Hole - The Multiverse War* is a CGI movie in the first person. Guests are therefore completely immersed in the experience as if they were living it firsthand. We were able to achieve this level of immersiveness by combining stereoscopy, special effects and motion synchronisation judiciously. Through the use

of stereoscopy, guests can see the images actually popping out of the screen; in this movie, objects and ruins seem so close to the spectators that they feel the need to fend off and move to dodge them, while creatures inhabiting space seem so near that they feel the authentic thrill of inescapability.

"Special effects significantly contribute to the movie's atmosphere as well," Laudani continued, "including elements such as motion base, air blast, water blast, leg ticklers, vibration, wind, bubbles and lightstorm."

According to Valeria Rizzo, Red Raion's pr and business development director, "*Black Hole - The Multiverse War* is currently available for licensing. It's now offered at BonBon Land in Denmark, and at Parque de Atracciones de Madrid in Spain."

Red Raion made a special effort to develop *Black Hole* for such diverse formats as 5D, VR and dome theatres. Antonio Cannata, the company's co-founder and strategy director, explained that "we aim to provide amusement professionals with a fast-growing library of content for licensing, available in all the formats they may need. In fact, we just announced that *Black Hole - The Multiverse War* is now available for licensing in the Flying Theatre format as well. We strongly feel that the Flying Theatre is truly a one of a kind immersive experience and, as such, it merits CGI content specifically designed for that format."

Red Raion has also developed, with Jora Vision and Vekoma, a highly immersive attraction called *The Eagle Warrior* for Vinpearl Land Phú Quốc, Vietnam, Laudani reports, noting: "The attraction is complete and ready to open, depending on the park's opening plans in light of the current COVID-19 situation."

In essence, *The Eagle Warrior* project integrates several attractions that will allow visitors to travel back in time to the fascinating world of the Aztec civilisation, with the help of CGI content.

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Image courtesy Bellewaerde

Why guests only complain online

By Chris Smoje

YOU may have heard the saying before that “people are full of complaints” or that “customers love to complain.” Now I’m not sure that either of those sayings are entirely true; in fact, based on research, the statistics appear to be divided.

On the one hand, data shows in some industries that complaints are on the rise (take the Telecommunications Ombudsman here in Australia for example), while on the other, we hear about cultures where customers don’t complain enough and vote with their feet instead. So it’s hard to be certain on whether we receive too much or too little feedback by way of complaints.

What is true is that the measure of a great service culture is one where complaints are handled effectively and used as opportunities to recover the customer. So in essence, they are an essential ingredient in the delivery of exceptional service.

The biggest issue regarding complaints is that they don’t always occur in real time. And if there was one crusade I’d like to fight, it would be this one – to think how better customer service experiences would be if complaints could be handled in real time.

Now this doesn’t mean in any way that I’m “anti-online-feedback.” Review sites like TripAdvisor, Google and Facebook are almost household names for the hospitality and tourism industry (which parks and

attractions fall under) and they certainly have their place. So I’m not suggesting we should abolish these. In fact, quite the opposite. I feel there is a huge opportunity for better service through online review sites – but that’s a topic for another edition.

In this article, I would like to focus on two big ideas. Firstly, are we seeing a decline in the number of face-to-face complaints and if so, why? And secondly, why is it important for team members to be prepared to deal with face-to-face complaints.

Let’s start with the first idea. A good way to frame this would be to ask the question, why do people complain online? I can think of many ways to answer that question which aren’t all that helpful for now, so a better way to rephrase it would be why don’t people complain face-to-face if they had the opportunity to? This means a guest has come to your attraction, they have experienced some sort of dissatisfaction and they have chosen to either say nothing or take their feedback away with them and bring it up later in an online forum.

The answer to this question is not as straightforward as you might think. In fact it’s a culmination of many things. Think about what it was like to be a customer in the decade 2000 to 2010. Or, if you were already in the workforce then, think about what it was like to work in frontline positions during that decade. This was the decade following on from the decade where the internet and email became mainstream. By the 2000’s all businesses were using email as a core component of business.

Image courtesy
Blackpool Pleasure
Beach



It was during this decade that whenever you would go to make a formal complaint in person, you would usually hear something along the lines of “Thanks for your feedback. It would be great if you could go and put that in writing so my manager can address it formally,” or something similar. I’m sure you can all relate to a situation where this has occurred to you.

Think about that for a second. It was this period where frontline staff were encouraging their customers, who approached them in person, to go back home, fire-up the old computer (that took ages to load when you turned it on) and resubmit their complaint in writing. Now it may not have been a huge deal back then, but what about from today’s viewpoint?

It would be absurd from a service perspective today for any one team member to direct a customer (even politely) who took the time to approach them, to go back home (or even use their smartphone) and complain there. In fact, I would say it’s quite the opposite. The number of businesses out there who wish their customers would have complained in person in the first instance versus going online is huge.

Which brings us to the second idea about how important it is for team members to be prepared to deal with face-to-face complaints.

I think the first issue with why customers complain online is that our team members don’t give them as much of an opportunity to give feedback in person. Think about a time when you’ve been to a large venue or even a restaurant. Team members don’t always make it easy for you to complain. For instance, finding them is the first hard part, but when you do, you catch them walking a “million miles per hour,” channelling a look on their face like they’re completing a mission for James Bond – it’s hard enough to grab their attention. Or what about that waiter who always

turns the opposite way to the way you are facing, or who never walks past your table when you want them to.

These mistakenly small things all add up and make it difficult for customers to complain – because it requires more effort on their part. Imagine the difference if we slowed down a little and anticipated the need for our customers to give feedback and if we made it easy for them, how much we’d actually receive.

The second issue is that sometimes the frontline people aren’t actually trained or given the permission to deal with things effectively. This is a big issue! Over time, and inadvertently, complaint handling techniques have shifted to online teams and social media departments. It is therefore possible that you actually can get better service to one of your complaints through the internet, rather than if talking to a real person face-to-face.

Better service online actually means that your frontline staff are wasted. They have always been the most obvious and therefore best placed point in your business to deal with complaints, but as businesses have become distracted by the shiny objects of social media and review sites, we have forgotten to ensure our frontline teams are the people who need the support to deal with complaints as they arise.



Image courtesy Bellewaerde

Chris Smoje is a Customer Service Expert, an alumni of the Disney Institute with theme park service leadership experience. Chris helps leaders and human resource teams create cultures that serve.

www.chrissmoje.com



Image courtesy Conny-Land

Open to Question

Bill Coan



Bill Coan,
president and CEO,
ITEC Entertainment
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BILL COAN has spent his 35-year career in the themed entertainment industry guiding the planning, design and production for some of the most iconic and diverse set of attractions around the globe. His work encompasses the development of rides, shows, cultural attractions, entertainment centres, mixed-use facilities, resorts and retail environments rooted in storytelling to create immersive and captivating environments.

Coan spent more than 13 years with the Walt Disney Company's themed attraction development group, Walt Disney Imagineering. Following his Disney career, he became a partner and design principal at ITEC Entertainment in 1993 and then its president and CEO in 1999. Under his leadership, ITEC has become one of the foremost developers of themed attractions in the industry.

In 20 years as president and CEO, Coan has guided ITEC Entertainment's steady growth in content development, planning, design, production and entertainment technologies servicing many of the most iconic entertainment companies and notable brands around the globe. He has also become a prominent voice on reopening strategies and considerations during COVID-19 as featured on CNN, CNBC, FOX Business and in publications such as *USA Today* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

InterPark: What are ITEC Entertainment's key products and services?

Bill Coan: The company has evolved over the years. It began as a consulting business back to Disney – we were all ex-Disney employees – but then as the 90s came along and the likes of Universal and others we expanded to work with other developers around the world. We offer three main services including the front end planning and design services from our creative studios, engineering and technical services and a project development group for projects which advance to opening.

IP: What types of venue does the company work with?

BC: We grew up in the theme park business so our core competences are within that sector, but over the years we've evolved and have a unique approach to providing design and technical expertise to other types of venue, including zoos, museums, retail outlets and more. We also work with real estate developers now, offering design solutions to this sector. So in our current portfolio we have clients who represent everything from theme parks to mixed-use real estate developers.



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IP: What would you say makes ITEC stand out from other suppliers of similar services and solutions? What are your USPs?

BC: All of the above mentioned aspects help us stand out. We provide very early services to all venues through these processes but follow that up with maintenance and support services too. Most firms in the areas of entertainment design and engineering do not provide this range of services to the industry. That broad based offering is then our strength.

IP: Can you provide a few details of two or three of the company's most recently completed projects or some you are currently working on?

BC: As usual there are a lot of things we can't talk about, but we have recently completed work for Universal Beijing Resort while another big project is the design for a multi-generational community called The Forestias, for one of the largest private sector property development group in Thailand. Here ITEC has partnered with Thailand property developer Magnolia Quality Development Corporation (MQDC) to develop an innovative and sustainable living community experience for residents of all ages. We have also developed support services and individual product items for sale. These encompass planning solutions for the reopening of attractions and specific technologies to help our clients address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IP: How does ITEC come up with its design and theming solutions? Where do you start with a project and are the ideas you use usually inspired by requests from/the needs of individual operators and developers or do you more often start with a 'blank canvas'?

BC: Our clients are very diverse so the solutions we provide are all different. We are not just theme parks guys but solution providers too. We apply our processes to a number of different venues, from park operators to cruise ships, mixed use real estate developers and more. We have been storytellers from the beginning, that's where we started so that is our approach to producing solutions for our clients. We offer different disciplines that make it all happen.

IP: When working with existing park and attraction/entertainment venues, what are some of the key solutions you might look to utilise to enhance the current visitor experience?

BC: Working in existing venues is always a bit more challenging; with a blank sheet to work with there are a lot less impediments. You need to allow existing venues to stay up and operating while adding value and improving what they already have with upgrades, additions and enhancements.

To this end we have created what we call our 'modernization' team. Because of our legacy in the business we have attractions that have operated

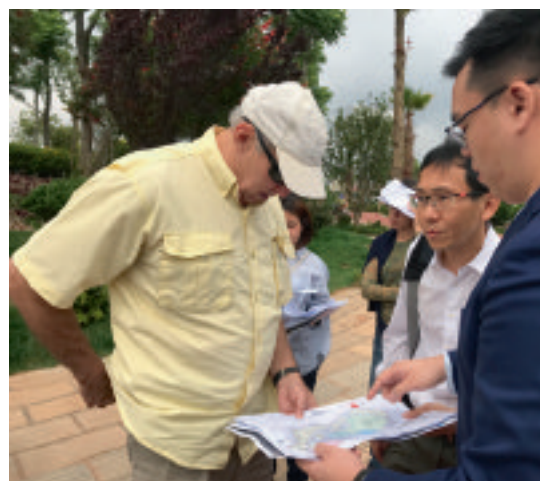
for 10, 15 or 20 years so now these have become obsolete on the technical side. So we look to go in and update the obsolete technologies thereby modernizing existing attractions. This is now a significant and growing part of the business.

IP: How do you see the ITEC offering developing in the future?

BC: Having been doing this for a long time growth is not necessarily the buzz word; it's more about sustaining what we do. Some of the strategic plans we developed three years ago have now changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have always looked to move into different client sectors as opposed to just theme parks in an effort to establish a broader base to continue to succeed. But then COVID came along and this accelerated our work in these different areas. We were fortunate that we were moving down the path of diversification already when the pandemic hit. We've also spread our footprint of offices and have opened offices overseas which has helped us to survive this highly unusual season.

IP: What changes and/or trends are you seeing in the parks and attractions industry globally at the present time?

BC: The basic year-to-year trends have been interrupted as a result of the pandemic. Previously you could see things coming and could deal with these. But the ability to see trends has gone for the time being and everyone is in survival mode. People are just waiting to see how they are going to do. The only trend is how everyone deals with these health and safety issues. This will be the hot topic for the next 12 months.



IP: How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted ITEC's work to date?

BC: It not only impacts our product but also the way we do business. You have no face-to-face contact at the moment unlike, for example, last year and before. So it interrupts the way we do business. We are all tuned in to Skype, Zoom and so on and are learning to get better at it, but even so some of this 'separation' is not good for a highly collaborative business.

IP: And what feedback are you getting from some of your clients as to how the pandemic has affected them? Is it different in different parts of the world?

BC: I'd say it's a matter of persevering at the present time. Most of what we had planned for 2020 has been delayed but we are fortunate to have a good roster of clients who are financially strong. Clients are thinking differently and are looking at how they can deal with such events in the future. This is what they'll all be concerned with.

As a creative and technical company, clients are looking to us to better understand how they can stay open and operating if this happens again. There is no day at the moment that I don't talk to someone on this subject.

Personally speaking

Not a lot of people know this but I am very good at ... hiding how bad I am at golf

The most interesting place I've ever been to is ... I've been to a lot of places but Israel is a favourite, along with Norway

Family aside, the prized possession I value above all others is ... the business we've created at ITEC

My favourite film is ... The Godfather series/*The Usual Suspects*

When I'm not working I like to ... be outside, on the water

The person who has influenced me most is ... my dad

My favourite musician/band is ... both Billy Joel and Leo Kottke

If I could invite a celebrity to dinner it would be ... Bill Murray

My unfulfilled ambition is ... to slow down without slowing down and giving up everything I do

I really dislike ... impatience

Gulliver's Valley, UK

PARKLIFE



THE Gulliver's story began back in 1978, when Ray and Hilary Phillips created a model village on the hillside of Matlock Bath, in Derbyshire, England, for young children to enjoy and, in turn, unwittingly went on to create several of the UK's most successful theme park resorts.

The company remains in the same family to this day with Julie Dalton, Ray and Hilary's daughter, now managing director of Gulliver's and her brother Nick, who is also heavily involved in the day to day running of the business, development director. Gulliver's Valley is the fourth park in the Gulliver's Theme Park Resorts family and is a welcome addition to Gulliver's Kingdom in Matlock Bath, Gulliver's Land in Milton Keynes and Gulliver's World in Warrington.

There are not many family-run parks left nowadays and what Gulliver's provides today is the same as when it all started – a fun day out for families. Gulliver's Valley Theme Park is the jewel in the crown of Rother Valley in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, a five phased development set to take place over a 10 year period.



Initially, it was planned to open the first phase of Gulliver's Valley in June 2020 but due to the coronavirus pandemic, this was delayed by a month and the park opened on July 11. And talking to *InterPark*, Julie Dalton explained the reasoning behind the decision to add a fourth park to the Gulliver's group.

"We had been looking for a while to create a fourth park," she reveals. "The business model is to position parks in population so we looked at different areas around the UK in our search for somewhere suitable. The Pennines (the range of hills between Lancashire and Yorkshire in

the north of England) has always been a bit of a block for people when it comes to travelling so with already having a park in the north west we decided going across the country to Yorkshire was an obvious area.

"The site of Gulliver's Valley links onto the Rother Valley Country Park. It is a perfect holiday and short breaks vicinity and Rotherham Council is investing a lot in the area. It works very well as a destination."

Construction began in 2018 and the first phase of the park, which is aimed at children between the ages of two and 13, is currently home to more than 30 rides and attractions including an Apache Falls ride, full-size diggers, the Ghostly Galleon pirate ship and a Lost Jurassic World area, which boasts all kinds of dinosaurs. There is also a mini farm with a host of animals to enjoy.

Various accommodation options are available, including unicorn and princess suites in a Fairytale Castle, alongside Western Cabins and Lost World Lodges, as well as a range of packages such as sleepovers. "This is a sample of what's

to come as far as accommodation is concerned," Dalton explained, "and we have planning for 500 lodges and three hotels."

Gulliver's Valley consists of a number of themed areas. Among these is the aforementioned Lost World Area, where guests can explore the wonders of the prehistoric age and discover more than 40 different dinosaurs, dig for fossils and look out for extraordinarily life-like dinosaurs that roam the park at set times throughout the day.

The centrepiece of the Jurassic area features T-Rex Tower, an 11m tall, 50m long double 'dry' waterslide. Additionally, the Lost World River Tour, built in-house, allows visitors to see the dinosaurs and Lost World inhabitants in a whole new way. Families can take an individual relaxing boat ride and tour the prehistoric paradise, while for a more exciting experience visitors can try the 360° thrill of the Gyrosaur, one of the most daring rides at Gulliver's Valley.

On the edge of the park is Western World, a wild west themed area. Here guests can walk through a reconstruction



PARKLIFE



of a wild west street complete with individual play areas and drop by the blacksmiths, bank and jail house to enjoy a fully immersive western experience. Rides in the area include Apache Falls, a spinning raft ride built in-house and designed to make a splash and provide plenty of thrills throughout its elevated course. Also on offer is Desperado Drop, a 12m drop tower from Moser's Rides that provides a spectacular view of Gulliver's Valley before a thrilling drop. Guests can also enjoy the sights of Western World by hopping on board Sioux City Express (SBF/Visa), a short train ride with multiple carriages designed to transport visitors back to the wild west.

Smugglers Wharf offers a nautical adventure inspired by pirates and swashbuckling tales. The area features a classic pirate ship ride from Zamperla called the Ghostly Galleon. Pirate Percy makes special appearances at Smugglers Wharf as he searches for his buried treasure, while on Blackbeard's Barrels, which was again built in-house, guests can choose their own barrel for some serious spinning action.



In Toyland, an outdoor area, families can enjoy a number of rides and attractions particularly aimed at younger guests, including a Ferris Wheel (SBF/Visa) and the Jumbo Jetters round ride (Zamperla), while in the Build Zone, a construction themed area, fully operational, full-sized diggers can be sampled by both children and adults in an experience families can enjoy together as they dig, build and create.

Bringing things indoors, Gully Town is the heart of Gulliver's Valley's huge indoor complex. This expansive area includes multiple play zones and attractions that are ideal for children aged five and under. Pre-schoolers can explore themed attractions such as Gully's Garage and the Animal Hospital and there are also special appearances from the Clangers and Tiny and Small. Gulliver's famous Chuckle Street is another element of Gully Town.



In addition to those mentioned, a variety of other key rides and attractions are also available, among these being the Paragliders (Chair-O-Planes), Melody Mayhem and Prairie Ponies from SBF/Visa, the Rocky Ridge Railway family coaster, Frantic Fire Trucks, Rockin' Tug, Pterosaur Turmoil and Treetop Drop, all from Zamperla, and the Lilliput Carousel from Concept 1900. More rides from Zamperla and SBF/Visa are to follow in the future, as is an indoor Splash Zone.

Explaining more about where the new park's visitors will come from, Dalton noted: "The park is very close to Sheffield, just 20 minutes away, so that is the core area, but

we also reach up to Newcastle and over to the east coast areas. Leeds and West Yorkshire generally provide some other big conurbations for us to tap into. The park has a design capacity of 3,000 per day in Phase One."

And she continued: "Phase One is what we have opened this year and we have a new area planned for next year. So we are moving forward already. We are continually developing all our parks and this one is the same."

As mentioned, the opening plans for Gulliver's Valley were, not surprisingly, impacted by the coronavirus pandemic with the official launch having to be put back approximately a month. Dalton confirmed that the pandemic affected things significantly.

"We reduced visitor numbers greatly so we could ensure social distancing, but at least we are open," she says. "There was a period when we didn't think we'd be open this year but we worked really hard to make it work with sanitising, social distancing, extra cleaning and so on. It's a challenge with the general public as they do forget certain things they should be doing when in a park or similar venue enjoying themselves.

And of the other parks in the group? "We are significantly down on numbers. You can't be closed for four months of the season and not be. We've had reduced capacity numbers but filled out every day of the school holidays. There was more business out there than we could take unfortunately. And of course we don't know how things will go for half term (due shortly after this article was written) and the Christmas holidays yet."



All images
courtesy
Gulliver's Valley

Opening a new park at any time is a challenge but to do so under the present circumstances surrounding the coronavirus pandemic clearly added to those challenges. The Phillips family is to be congratulated on the creation of the fourth Gulliver's park and hopefully it will be sooner rather than later that their efforts can be truly rewarded with operations, and visitor numbers, getting back to normal.



At a glance

Opened in July 2020

Fourth park in the Gulliver's group

Key element of Rother Valley development

Over 30 rides and attractions

Six themed areas in Phase One

Choices of accommodation

Zamperla and SBF/Visa key ride suppliers

www.gulliversvalleyresort.co.uk

“Who’s zooming who?”

By Dennis Speigel



Image courtesy Zoom

Continuing his series of articles on the attractions industry, International Theme Park Services (ITPS) founder and CEO Dennis Speigel discusses how video conferencing has changed the way we all work during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to do so in the future

THERE is a saying in the USA which asks, “Who’s zooming who”? If you are not familiar, it means who is fooling who.

Today, who’s zooming has a totally different connotation. It asks the question, “Who are you video conferencing today?” Are you calling me or am I calling you? Two years ago, even one year ago, most of the people reading this article never used or, in many cases, zoomed a call. Here at ITPS, we are guaranteed at least two to three or more video calls per day. Today was Spain, South Africa and New York.

There are all types of video conference links, including GoToMeeting, Cisco Webx, Blue Jeans Meeting, Team Viewer, Join Me, Skype, Uber Conference and more. This partially identifies video conferencing companies being used millions of times a day.

Image courtesy Zoom

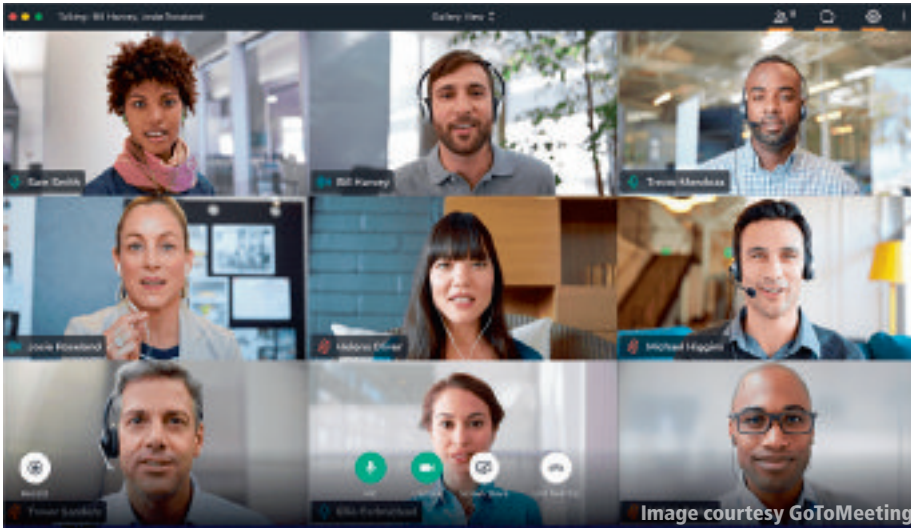


It is amazing that since COVID-19 struck, video conferencing has taken over the world of business communication. Video conferencing expanded to such a high level in order for companies to communicate with their personnel because they sent everyone home to work remotely (now going on nine months!) Some sort of business normality is being felt as businesses and countries secluded have begun getting used to video conferencing.

Video conferencing has allowed work to continue, but it has also created what we know today as “Zoom fatigue” among workers. Many companies are “taking breaks” from employees working remotely constantly zooming. Working remotely has created situations where employees are “hooked” on their computers and find themselves unable to walk away from the screens. This is amplified by constant video zooms and these people are getting zoom fatigue, tired and stressed from the constant bombarding day in and day out of video meetings. Many of us can relate!

In just nine months or so we have created the carpal tunnel syndrome of mental fatigue by zooming. Somewhat funny, but serious as well. We all know staying in touch while we are under the “plague” is important since it is difficult to no longer work in harmoniously common spaces. So, Zoom, Skype or GoToMeeting keep us in touch and projects afloat.

We know that being forced to work remotely will have a lasting impact on our future. Some companies will continue



to allow or require employees to remain at home. We are already seeing large companies, such as Proctor & Gamble, Google, Twitter, Facebook and many more take this approach.

Office contracting as we have known it may be gone forever. Many companies are becoming digitally remote by simple default. It is becoming a new era of "agility for employees." We shall see how it maps out, but many employers are making it permanent because it will provide a better work-life balance with non-commutes and lesser rents.

Companies are re-designing their offices to accommodate in-person meetings when necessary and some are re-designing the real estate footprint of their offices for the video conferencing world of today and tomorrow. One executive at the Ford Auto Company said they are expanding the positive experience and efficiency of telework. They plan to strengthen their remote work programmes exponentially. Up until now, work occurred in the office with very few people working remotely. Now the reverse is happening, Ford executives said. I believe it will continue in this manner, particularly as technology improves and the comfort level at both employer and employee levels settles in to accommodate the new work approach. It is working.

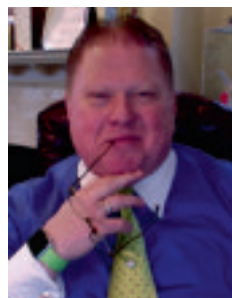
We know leisure attractions are planned and geared to provide relaxation and fun for all types of people; however, they are for the most part (theme parks) labour intensive. It takes a large number of employees to operate the facility and they have to be on site. A Japanese leisure attraction is experimenting with robotic assistance to supplement on site workers, but that is different to sending employees home to work remotely. That is eliminating workforce.

We must understand we are going to experience all types of changes in the workforce – remote, robotic, as live face-to-face interactions decline! Business approaches continue to change around us every day. In the near and distant future, we will continue asking the question "Who's zooming who?" in a fun way. However, the new meaning has a much greater implication and application to today's workforce.

Well, got to go – a Zoom is coming in now!

***Dennis Spiegel** is founder and CEO of International Theme Park Services (ITPS), based in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. A past chairman of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), he has over 50 years' experience in the theme park and leisure industry. Since its inception in 1983 ITPS has worked on over 500 projects in 50 countries and is uniquely qualified to assist in all aspects of entertainment project development.*

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World news round-up ...

UK Legoland Windsor Resort will debut a new multi-million pound land in 2021 "where mythical Lego creatures will come to life." Opening in the spring of next year, Lego Mythica: World of Mythical Creatures will feature new attractions and experiences, including a never-before-seen UK ride. Created for kids by kids, the parallel universe of Lego Mythica marks the resort's single biggest investment since its gates opened 25 years ago. Working in partnership with Kids Industries, the Legoland Windsor team behind the new land spent a year discussing and testing ideas and concepts with seven to 11-year-olds and their parents who influenced everything from the final ride experiences to names and characters.

GERMANY IAAPA EMEA is planning to hold a trade summit at Europa-Park from February 2 to 4, 2021. The newly launched event format will include a trade show with equal booth sizes, with over 80 exhibitors already confirmed, as well as education and networking opportunities. Designed to bring the industry together again following the cancellation of so many industry events in 2020, the summit will also include EDUTours to the Rulantica waterpark, Pirates of Batavia, accommodation and virtual reality (upon availability). Packages for both attendees and exhibitors are available.

CHINA Fantawild Holdings has signed a contract with the Shiyan City (Hubei province) government to invest CNY5.1 billion (\$760m) in the development of a traditional cultural park at Wudang Mountain Tourism Special Economic Zone. The project will cover 4,046,856sq.m. Out of the total investment figure, CNY3.1 billion (\$462m) will be used for the theme park and CNY2 billion (\$298m) for supporting facilities. Based on ecological priority and inspired by the essence of "Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism," the project will incorporate historical and cultural stories and artistic achievements, as well as cutting-edge technologies, to create a landmark for the region.

CANADA CAVU Designwerks (CAVU), a leading provider of fully integrated, immersive experiences, recently introduced Quest, which according to the company is the themed entertainment industry's first walkthrough ride. The interactive attraction represents a revolutionary new genre of attractions and provides new possibilities for story-based attractions for a wider audience than ever before. Quest was created in response to the challenges of COVID-19. In consultation with operators of entertainment facilities worldwide, it was noted that there was a consolidated need for experiences that are smaller, more modular and flexible, less expensive and which have a quicker turnaround. Quest accomplishes all this while further spreading out guests and maintaining throughput.

US Christie has launched the Christie CounterAct line of commercial UV disinfection products with patented Care222 far-UVC light technology for cinemas, theme parks, museums, sports complexes and other indoor spaces. Unlike comparable products, the Christie fixture uses Ushio's patented narrowband filtered Care222 excimer lamps that emit far-UVC 222nm light – the only UV technology shown to continuously and significantly reduce pathogens, like coronaviruses, that may also be used while people are present, when used in accordance with specified parameters. Developed by Christie's parent company, Ushio Inc., based on technology licensed from Columbia University, the revolutionary Care222 far-UVC, mercury-free excimer lamp includes a proprietary short pass filter that prevents the emission of longer wavelengths of UV light (230nm and higher) that are capable of penetrating human skin and eyes, an especially important feature that some other 222nm and far-UVC products do not have. Mass production of the new Christie CounterAct fixture starts in January 2021.

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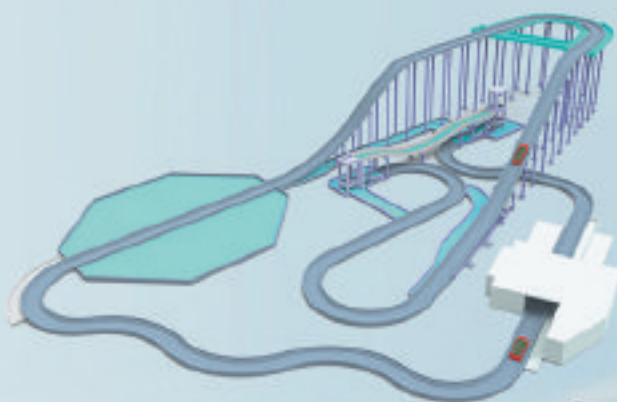
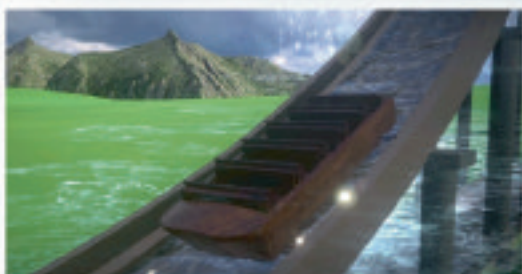
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